

**D A N G E R O U S
C O N N E C T I O N S :**

O R,

**L E T T E R S
C O L L E C T E D I N A S O C I E T Y,**

A N D

**P U B L I S H E D F O R T H E I N S T R U C T I O N O F
O T H E R S O C I E T I E S.**

B Y M. C** DE L****.**

**I have observed the Manners of the Times, and have
wrote those Letters.**

J. J. ROUSSEAU. Pref. to the New Eloise.

V O L. III.



L O N D O N :

P R I N T E D F O R T. H O O K H A M,

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M.DCC.LXXXIV.

D A N G E R O U S
C O N N E C T I O N S.

L E T T E R L X X X V I I I .

CECILIA VOLANGES *to the Viscount*
de VALMONT.

ALTHOUGH I have the greatest pleasure in receiving the Chevalier Danceny's letters, and I wish as ardently as he does, we might see each other without interruption, yet I dare not venture to do what you propose. First, I think it too dangerous ;

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B

the

the key you desire I should put in the place of the other resembles it pretty much, it is true: but still there is some difference, and mama is so exceedingly watchful, that nothing escapes her; besides, though it has not been used since we came here, an accident might happen, and if it was missed, I should be ruined for ever. Moreover, it would be very wrong to have a double key; that would be too much: it is true, you would take the management of it yourself; but yet if it should come to be known, all the reproach would fall on me, as it would be done for me; not that there is any difficulty in the matter, and I twice had a mind to take it, but something came over me, and I was seized with such a tremor, my resolution failed me. I believe, then, we had better remain as we are.

If you will be so good to continue your friendship as you have done hitherto,

CONNECTIONS. 8

therto, you will always find an opportunity to deliver me a letter. Even the last I should have had very readily, had it not been for the accident of your turning about so suddenly. I am very sensible, you cannot be always taken up with those matters as I am : but I would rather have a little patience than run such risks. I am certain Mr. Danceny would be of the same opinion : for whenever he wanted any thing I was not inclined to, he instantly gave it up.

You will find, Sir, with this letter, your own, Mr. Danceny's, and your key. I am, nevertheless, extremely obliged to you for your kindness, which I entreat you to continue to me. I am, indeed, very miserable, and should be much more so, were it not for you : but she is my mother, and I must have patience ; and provided Mr. Danceny will always love

B 2

me,

me, and you do not desert me, I may yet, perhaps, be happy.

I have the honour to be,
with the utmost gratitude,

SIR,

your most humble and
obedient servant.

Sept. 26, 17—.

L E T T E R LXXXIX.

*The Viscount de VALMONT to the Che-
valier DANCENY.*

IF your affairs do not go on quite so rapidly as you wish, my dear friend, it is not altogether my fault. I have many obstacles to encounter here. Madame de Volanges' vigilance and severity are not the only ones; your young friend also throws some in my way. Whether it proceeds from cold-
ness,

ness, or timidity, she will not always do what I advise her; and yet I think I should know better than she what is proper to be done.

I had proposed an easy, commodious, and safe way of delivering your letters to her, and even to smoothe the way of the interviews you wish for so much; but I have not been able to determine her to make use of it. This gives me the more concern, as I can't think of any other means of bringing you together; and I am even incessantly terrified at the danger we all three are exposed to on account of your correspondence; you may then very well imagine, I do not chuse to risk myself, nor expose you both to it.

Still it would give me the greatest uneasiness, that your little friend's want of confidence in me should deprive me of the pleasure of being useful to you; I think you would do well to write to her on the subject.

Act as you think proper ; you are to determine ; for it is not enough that we serve our friends : we must serve them in the manner the most pleasing to themselves. It might be also another means of ascertaining the degree of her affection for you ; for the woman who retains a will of her own, does not love to that degree she ought. Not that I have any suspicion of her constancy : but she is very young ; she is in great awe of her mother, who you already know to be your enemy ; therefore it might be dangerous to suffer her to wain her mind from you : however, I would not have you make yourself in the least uneasy, as it is the solicitude of friendship only, and not any diffidence whatever, that makes me so explicit.

I must break off, as I have some important matters of my own to attend. I am not so far advanced as you are : but my passion is as ardent ;
that

CONNECTIONS.

7

that is my consolation. And was I to be unsuccessful in my own, it would be a pleasure to think, my time has been well employed if I can be useful in your's. Adieu, my dear friend !

Castle of —,

Sept. 26, 17—.

LETTER XC.

*The Presidente de TOURVEL to the Vis-
count de VALMONT.*

I Much wish, Sir, this letter may not give you uneasiness ; or, if it should, I hope it will be alleviated by that which I confess I now experience in writing to you. You should, I think, by this time be sufficiently acquainted with my sentiments, to be assured I would not willingly afflict you ; and flatter myself, you are incapable of

making me for ever miserable. I beseech you, then, by the tender friendship I have professed, and those softer sentiments, and more sincere than any you have for me, let us no longer see one another. Leave me; and until then, let us avoid particularly those dangerous conversations, when by an unaccountable attraction I am lost in attending to what I ought not to listen to, and forget what I intend to say.

When you joined company with me in the park yesterday, I fully intended telling you what I am now about to write. What was the consequence? Why to be totally engaged on a subject to which I ought never to listen: your love. For heaven's sake! depart from me. Fear not that absence should alter my sentiments for you; for how can I possibly overcome them, when I am no longer able to contend with them. You see I confess my weakness, and I dread less to own it
than

C O N N E C T I O N S.

than I do to yield to it : but the command I have lost over my mind, I will still preserve over my actions ; this I am determined on, were it at the expence of life.

Alas ! the time is not very distant, that I imagined myself proof against such temptations. I felicitated myself on it, I fear, too much ; I was, perhaps, too vain of it ; and Heaven has punished, and cruelly punished, that pride : but all-merciful, even in the hour in which it strikes us, it warns me again before an utter fall ; and I should be doubly guilty, if, being sensible of my weakness, I should abandon my prudence.

You have often told me, you would not desire a happiness purchased at the expence of my tears. Let us no longer talk of happiness ; let me, at least, regain some degree of tranquillity.

In acceding to my request, what fresh claims will you not acquire over my heart, and those founded upon virtue ! How I shall enjoy my gratitude ! I shall owe to you the happiness of entertaining, without any remorse, a sentiment of the most delicious kind. Now, on the contrary, startled at my sentiments and my thoughts, I am equally afraid of occupying my mind either with you or myself. The very idea of you terrifies me. When I cannot fly from it, I combat it. I do not banish it, but repulse it.

Is it not better for us to terminate this state of trouble and anxiety ? You, whose tender heart has even in the midst of errors remained the friend of virtue, you will attend to my distressed situation ; you will not reject my prayer. A milder but as tender an attachment will succeed these violent agitations. Then regaining my
existence

existence through your beneficence, I will cherish that existence, and will say in the joy of my heart, the calm I now feel I owe to my friend.

By submitting to some slight privations, which I do not impose upon you, but intreat you to yield to, will you think a termination of my sufferings too dearly purchased? Ah! if to render you happy, there was only my own consent that I should be unhappy, you may rely on it, I should not hesitate a moment: but to become criminal! no, my friend, I shall prefer a thousand deaths.

Even now, assailed by shame, and on the eve of remorse, I dread all others and myself equally. I blush when in any circle, and feel a horror when in solitude. I no longer lead any but a life of grief. I can only re-establish my tranquillity by your consent; my most laudable resolutions are insufficient to afford me security. I have

formed the resolution I have just mentioned no longer than yesterday, and yet have passed the last night in tears.

Behold your friend, her whom you love, confounded, and supplicating you for the preservation of her repose and her innocence. Oh, heaven! would she ever but through your means have been reduced to make such humiliating entreaties! I, however, do not reproach you with anything. I feel too sensibly, from the experience of myself, how difficult it is to resist so over-ruling a sentiment. A lamentation such as mine ought not to be deemed a murmur. Do, from generosity what I do from duty; and to all the sentiments you have inspired me with, I shall add that of eternal gratitude. Adieu, adieu, Sir!

From ———,
Sept. 27, 17—.

L E T.

L E T T E R XCI.

*Viscount de VALMONT to the Presidente
de TOURVEL.*

PLUNGED into consternation as I am by your letter, how shall I answer it, Madam? Doubtless, if the alternative is your unhappiness or mine, it is my duty to sacrifice myself, and I do not hesitate to do it: but concerns so interesting, merit, I think, full discussion and elucidation; and how shall we arrive at that, if we are no longer to see or speak to one another.

What! whilst the most tender sentiments unite us, shall a vain terror be able to separate us, perhaps, for ever! Shall tender friendship and ardent love in vain endeavour to assert their rights, and their voices remain

unattended to ! And why ? What is this very urgent danger which threatens you ? Ah ! believe me, such fears, and fears taken up so lightly, are in themselves sufficiently powerful motives for your considering yourself in a state of security.

Permit me to tell you, I can here trace again the unfavourable impressions which have been made upon you with regard to me. No woman trembles at the man she esteems. No woman banishes him in a marked manner; whom she has thought worthy of some degree of friendship. It is the dangerous man who is feared and fled.

And yet, was there ever a person more respectful and submissive than I ? You must perceive it. Guarded in my language, I no longer permit myself those appellations so sweet, so dear to my heart, and which that heart unceasingly applies to you secretly. It
is

is no longer the faithful and unfortunate lover receiving the advice and consolation of a tender and feeling female friend. I am in the situation of the accused before his judge, of the slave before his lord. These new titles certainly impose on me duties: I bind myself to fulfil them all. Hear me, and if you condemn me, I subscribe to my sentence and depart. I will go farther. Do you prefer that despotism which decides without a hearing? Do you feel boldness enough to commit an act of injustice? Give your orders; you shall be obeyed.

But let me have this sentence or order from your mouth. But why? You will tell me in your turn. Ah! if you put such a question, you are a stranger to love and to my heart. Is it nothing to see you? I repeat it again. Even when you shall strike despair to my soul, perhaps a consoling glance will prevent its sinking. In a word; if I
must

must renounce love and friendship, the only props of my existence, at least you will behold your works, and I shall engage your compassion. Though I should not even deserve this small favour, I think I submit to pay dearly enough for it, to give me hopes of obtaining it. What, you are about to banish me from you ! You can consent, then, that we should become utter strangers to one another ! What do I say ? It is the wish of your heart ; and whilst you assure me that my absence shall not prejudice me in your sentiments, you only hasten my departure, in order more securely to effect their destruction, which you begin even now, by talking of substituting gratitude in their place. Thus you offer me only that sentiment which a stranger would inspire you with for a slight service ; that kind of sentiment which you would feel for an enemy desisting from premeditated injury ;

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injury ; and you expect my heart to be content with this. Interrogate your own. If a lover, a friend, should ever come to talk to you of gratitude, would you not say to him with indignation, Withdraw, you are a worthless man ?

I shall here stop, and repeat my requests of your indulgence. Pardon the expressions of grief of which you are the cause ; they shall not interfere with my perfect submission : but I conjure you in turn, in the name of those tender sentiments which you yourself resort to with me, refuse not to hear ; and from mere compassion for the aggravated distress you have plunged me in, defer not the moment in which you will condescend to hear me. Adieu, Madam !

From ———,

Sept. 7, 17—, at night.

L E T.

L E T T E R X C I I .

Chevalier DANCENY to the Viscount de VALMONT.

YOUR letter, my dear friend, has overwhelmed me with sorrow. Heavens ! Is it possible Cecilia no longer loves her Danceny ! Yes, I plainly see it through the veil your friendship has thrown over it. You wished to prepare me for this mortal stab ; I thank you for your care : but a lover is not thus to be deceived ; he anticipates his concerns ; he is not to learn his fate, he prefigures it. I have no longer any doubt of mine. I entreat you to inform me, without evasion, from whence your suspicions arise, and what confirms them ; the most minute trifles are important. Recollect.

C O N N E C T I O N S. . .

lect particularly her expressions. A word may alter a phrase, or bear a double meaning. You may have mistaken her.

Alas, I endeavour still to flatter myself. What did she say? Has she any thing to reproach me with? Does she not attempt to excuse herself? I might have foreseen this alteration by all the difficulties she has lately stated. Love admits no obstacles.

What am I to do? What would you advise me to? Is it then impossible to see her? Absence is such a dreadful, such a fatal — and she refuses the means you proposed to see me! You don't, however, tell me what it was; if it really was dangerous, she is convinced I would not have her run a great risk: however, I am satisfied of your prudence, and pay no regard to any other consideration.

What

What will now become of me? How shall I write to her? If I hint my suspicions, she will probably be grieved; and should they be ill grounded, how shall I ever forgive myself for having given her cause for affliction? If I conceal them, it is deceiving her, and I cannot dissemble it.

Oh! could she but know what I suffer, my distress would move her, for she is tender, has a most excellent heart, and I have a thousand proofs of her affection. Too much timidity, some distress, she is young, and her mother treats her so severely. I will write to her; yet I will contain myself, and will only beg of her to leave the management of every thing to you. If she should even still refuse, she cannot at least be angry with me, and perhaps she may consent.

I beg ten thousand pardons, my dear friend, both for her and myself.

Give

C O N N E C T I O N S. 25

Give me leave to assure you, she is very sensible of the trouble you have had, and is exceedingly grateful. It is not distrust, it is merely timidity. Have a little compassion for her weakness, the highest attribute of friendship. Your's to me is inestimable, and I am really at a loss how to express my gratitude. Adieu! I am just going to write to her.

All my fears return on me. I could not have believed yesterday, when it would have been my greatest happiness, that I should now experience so much distress in writing to her.

Adieu, my dear friend! continue your friendship, and compassionate me.

Paris, Sept. 27, 17—.

L E T.

L E T T E R X C I I I .

Chevalier DANCENY to CECILIA VOL-
LANGES.

I CANNOT conceal my affliction at hearing from Valmont how much you still distrust him. You know he is my friend, and the only person who can give us an opportunity of seeing each other: I fondly imagined this would have been a sufficient recommendation, but am very sorry to find I am mistaken. May I, however, hope to know your reasons? There are, perhaps, some obstacles that prevent you; I cannot, however, without your aid, guess at this mysterious conduct. I dare not entertain any suspicion of your affection, neither would you deceive mine. Ah, Cecilia!

It

It is, then, past a doubt, that you have refused *an easy, commodious, and safe way* * of seeing me. And is it thus I am beloved? Has so short an absence altered your sentiments? — Why, then, deceive me? Why tell me you still love me, and even still more? Has your mama, by destroying your affection for me, also destroyed your candour? If, however, she has not left you destitute of compassion, you will feel for the pangs you occasion me, which death cannot even equal.

Tell me, then, have I for ever lost your heart? Am I totally forgotten? I know not when you will hear my complaints, nor when they will be answered. Valmont's friendship had secured our correspondence, but you rejected it; you thought it trouble-

* Danceny does not know the way; he only repeats Valmont's expression.

some; it was too frequent. Never more will I confide in love or in promises. Who is to be believed, when Cecilia deceives me?

Am I no longer, then, your beloved Danceny? No, that is not possible; you deceive your own heart. A transitory apprehension, a momentary gloom, causes my present distress, which love will soon dispel: is it not so, my adorable Cecilia? Yes, it is, and I am much to blame for accusing you. How happy shall I be to discover my error, and repair it by soothing apologies and never-ending love.

Cecilia, lovely Cecilia, take pity on me; consent to see me; form the plan yourself: this is the consequence of absence; fears, doubts, and perhaps coolness. One single glance, a word only, and we shall be happy. But why mention happiness? Mine is, perhaps, at an end, and that for ever.

Tortured

Tortured with apprehensions, suspended between doubts and fears, I cannot form a resolution. My existence depends on love and sufferings: You alone, my Cecilia, are the arbitress of my fate; you alone can decide on my happiness or misery.

Paris, Sept. 27, 17—

L E T T E R XCIV.

CECILIA VOLANGES *to the Chevalier*
DANCENY.

I CANNOT conceive a word of your letter, — it gives me much uneasiness. What, then, has M. de Valmont wrote to you? Can you think I no longer love you? Perhaps it would be much better for me if it was otherwise, for I should not be so tormented as I am; it is really hard,
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that, loving as I do, you should always think me wrong; and instead of receiving consolation in my afflictions, the cause of all my troubles should proceed from you. You imagine I deceive and misrepresent matters to you. Upon my word you have a good opinion of me : But even suppose it the case, what would it avail me ? Certainly, if I ceas'd loving you, all my friends would be glad of it ; but it is my misfortune I cannot, and must love a man who is not in the least obliged to me.

What have I done, then, to put you so much out of temper ? I was afraid to take a key, lest my mama should discover it, and bring more trouble on you and me ; moreover, I did not think it right. How did I know whether I was acting right or wrong, as you knew nothing of the matter, and it was Mr. Valmont only that mentioned it ? Now that I know
you

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you would wish me to do it, I will take it to-morrow; then, I suppose, you will be satisfied. — Mr. de Valmont may be your friend, for ought I know, but I think I love you as well as he does, at least; and yet he is always right, and I am wrong. — I assure you, I am very angry; however, that gives you no great uneasiness, as you know I am soon pacified: when I have the key, I can see you whenever I please: if you behave in this manner, though, I will not wish for it; I can better bear my own troubles than those you bring on me.

We might be happy still, only for the little disagreeable occurrences thrown in our way; if I was my own mistress, you would have no reason to complain: But, if you will not believe me, we shall always be very miserable; yet it shall not be my fault. I hope we shall soon see each other, and then shall have no reason to be so tormented as we are now.

Could I have foreseen all this, the key should have been in my possession ; but, indeed, I thought I was doing right. Do not be angry with me, I beg of you. Don't afflict yourself any more, and love me as much as I love you ; then I shall be happy. Adieu, my dear friend.

From the castle of ——,

Sept. 28, 17—.

L E T T E R XCV.

CECILIA VOLANGES *to the Viscount*
de VALMONT.

S I R,

I B E G you will return me the key you gave me to put in the place of the other ; since it must be so, I must agree to it.

I don't

I don't know why you should write to Mr. Danceny, I did not love him : I don't think I ever gave you any reason to say so ; it has given us both a great deal of uneasiness : — I know you have a friendship for him, therefore should not fret him nor me neither. I should be much obliged to you if, when you write to him next, you would assure him of the contrary ; for he reposes his confidence in you : nothing gives me so much trouble as not to be believed when I say a thing.

As to the key, you may make yourself perfectly easy ; I remember all you wrote me very well ; but if you have your letter still by you, and will give it to me at the same time, I assure you I shall take particular notice of it. If you contrive to give it me to-morrow as we go to dinner, I would give you the other key the day after at breakfast, and you could

return it to me in the same way you did the first. Pray do not defer it any longer, as we ought not to give Mama an opportunity to discover it.

When you have once got possession of the key, you will be so good to make use of it to take my letters; and by this means Mr. Danceny will oftener hear from me, which will be much more convenient than at present. I was a good deal frightened at first, which I hope you will be so good to excuse; and that you will, nevertheless, continue your friendship as heretofore: you may depend on my gratitude.

I have the honour to be,

S I R,

Your most obedient

Humble Servant.

Sept. 28, 17—.

L E T.

L E T T E R XCVI.

*L'iscourt de VALMONT to the Marchio-
ness de MERTEUIL.*

I DARE say, you have been in daily expectation of my compliments and eulogiums on your adventure, I even make no doubt but my long silence may have put you a little out of temper: But to sum up all, I will freely own I have ever thought, that when one had nothing but praise to offer a woman, he might safely trust to herself, and employ his time on other matters. Yet I must thank you for my share in it, and congratulate you on your own. I will even, for this once, to make you perfectly happy, agree you have much surpassed my expectations. And now let us

see, whether, on my side, I have not partly fulfilled yours.

Madame de Tourvel is not the subject we are now on ; her slow proceedings do not meet your approbation ; you like to hear of business done ; long-spun scenes disgust you ; but I never before experienced the pleasure I do now in those pretended delays.

Yes, I enjoy it ; to see this prudent woman, entangled imperceptibly in a path from whence she cannot return ; whose rapid and dangerous declivity hurries her on against her will, and forces her to follow me — then, frightened at the danger, would, but cannot stop ; — her anxiety and wariness make her steps slow, but still they must succeed each other. Sometimes, not daring to view the danger, she shuts her eyes, and abandons herself to my care. New dreads often reanimate her efforts ; and, in her
grievous

grievous fright, she again endeavours to return, wastes her strength to climb painfully a short space; and soon, by a magic power, finds herself nearer the danger she vainly endeavoured to fly. Then, having no other guide or support but me, without thinking any longer of reproaching me with her inevitable fall, she implores me to protract it. Fervent prayers, humble supplications, all that terrified mortals offer up to the Divinity, I receive from her; and you would have me be deaf to her vows, to destroy the worship she renders me, and employ the power she invokes to support her, in hurling her into destruction. Let me at least have time to contemplate this affecting struggle between love and virtue.

Is not this, then, the exhibition you fly to at the theatre with so much avidity, and applaud with so much ardour? And do you imagine it can

be less endearing in realizing it? — The sentiments of a pure and tender heart, which dreads the happiness it wishes, and ceases not to defend itself when it even ceases to resist, you enthusiastically admire: And pray, is the ruling principle of this great work to be rejected?

Yet, those are the delicious enjoyments this celestial woman daily offers me, and you reproach me for relishing them. Alas! the time will come too soon, when, degraded by her fall, I shall view her with as much indifference as another.

But I wander; for, speaking of her, I forget that I did not intend even to mention her. An unknown power impels me, and incessantly recalls her to me when I am even injuring her: let me banish this dangerous idea, be myself again, and entertain you with a more agreeable adventure. Your late pupil, now be-

I come

come mine, shall be the subject; and now, I hope, you'll again know your friend.

Having, for a few days past, been more gently treated by my charming devotee, and consequently more disengaged, I observed the little Volanges was really handsome; and that if it was ridiculous in Danceny to be in love with her, it would be no less so in me not to embrace a dissipation that my solitude called for. I even thought it an act of justice, to repay myself for the trouble I had had with her: I recollected, also, that you offered her to me before Danceny had any pretensions to her; and thought myself well grounded in asserting certain rights, which he claimed only from my refusal and abdication. The engaging mien of the little creature, her pretty mouth, her childish air, even her awkwardness, strengthened those sage reflections. I deter-

mined to act conformably, and success has crown'd the enterprize. I think I see you all impatience to know how I supplanted the cherished lover, the seducing arts fit to be employed for such a tender age, and so unexperienced: spare yourself the trouble, for I employed none. — Whilst you, managing with dexterity the arms of your sex, triumph by artifice, I, in a manly way, subdue by authority, — sure of my prey, if I can close with it. I had no occasion for dissimulation, but to get it within my reach, and that I made use of scarcely deserves the name.

I took the advantage of the first letter Danceny wrote to his fair one, and, after having made the signal agreed on, instead of employing my address to deliver it, I contriv'd obstacles to prevent it; and, feigning a share in the impatience this excited, pointed out the remedy after causing the evil.

The

The young thing is lodged in an apartment that opens into the gallery, and the mother, very properly; keeps the key. Nothing, then, was wanting but to get possession of the key, and nothing more easy in the execution: I asked for it for two hours, only to have another made by it: then correspondence, interviews, nocturnal rendezvous, all were convenient and safe: but, would you believe it, the timid child was frightened, and refused. Any other would have been driven to despair: to me it was a more poignant pleasure. I wrote to Danceny, complaining of this denial; and was so successful, that the thoughtless youth urged, nay even exacted of his timid mistress, that she should agree to my request, and give herself up to my discretion.

I must own myself well pleased to change my character, and that the young man should do for me what he expected

expected I was to do for him. This idea enhanc'd the value of the adventure; and, as soon as I got possession of the delicious key, I lost no time: — it was last night.

When I was assured all were at rest in the Castle, taking my dark lantern, and in a proper toilette for the hour and circumstance, I paid my first visit to your pupil. Every thing had been prepared (and that by herself) to prevent noise: she was in her first sleep, so that I was by her bed side without awaking her. I was at first tempted to go on farther, and make every thing pass for a dream; but dreading the effects of a surprize, and the consequences naturally attendant, I chose to awake the pretty sleeper cautiously, which I effected without the alarm I dreaded.

After having calmed her first fears, as I did not come there to chat, I ventured to take some liberties: they
did

did not, certainly, inform her in the convent, to how many different dangers timid innocence is exposed, and all that she had to take care of to guard against a surprize; for, using all her strength to prevent a kiss, which was only a false attack, she left all the rest defenceless: how was it possible to resist the temptation?— I then changed my attack, and immediately took possession of the post. At that instant we had both like to be undone; the little girl, scared, was in earnest going to cry out; happily, her voice was stifled with her tears: she flung herself, also, on the string of the bell, but I held her arm opportunely.

“ What are you about? (then said
 “ I) Will you ruin yourself for ever?
 “ Do you think you will be able to
 “ persuade any one that I am here
 “ without your consent? Who but
 “ yourself could supply me the means
 “ of

“ of getting in? — And this key that
“ I had from you, which I could not
“ have from any one else, will you
“ take it upon you to tell the use it
“ was designed for?” — This short
speech did not calm either grief or
anger, but it brought on submission:
I don’t know whether I had the tone
of eloquence, but certain I am I had
not the action: one hand employed
for strength, the other for love, what
orator could pretend to gracefulness
in such a situation? If you conceive
it right, you must own, at least, it
was very favourable for the attack:
but I know nothing; and, as you say,
the simplest creature, a boarding-
school girl, would lead me like a
child.

She was in the utmost affliction, but
felt the necessity of coming to some
resolution, and entering into a compo-
sition. Being inexorable to prayers,
she proceeded to offers: you think,
perhaps,

perhaps, I sold this important post very dear ; by no means ; I promised every thing for a kiss ; however, the kiss taken, I did not keep my word ; my reasons were good : it had not been agreed whether it should be given or taken ; by dint of bargaining we agreed on a second, and that was to be received ; then guiding her trembling arms round me, and pressing her with one of mine more amorously, the soft kiss was not only received, but perfectly received in such a manner, that love could not have done it better. — So much plain dealing deserved to be rewarded, and I immediately granted the request : the hand was withdrawn, but, I don't know by what accident, I found myself in its place. You now suppose me very alert, and in great haste, don't you ? — Not in the least ; I have already told you I delight in delays : when one is once certain of coming to the end of the journey, what occasion for haste ?

Seriously,

Seriously, I was glad, for once, to observe the power of opportunity ; and it was here divested of all foreign aid. She had, however, love to combat with ; and love, supported by modesty and shame, strengthened by the bad humour I had put her in. There was nothing in my favour but opportunity ; — it was there, always ready, always present, and love absent.

To be certain in my observations, I was so mischievous to employ no more force than what could be easily combated : only, if my charming enemy, abusing my condescension, attempted to escape me, I kept her in awe, by the same dread whose happy effects I had already experienced. — At length the tender, lovely girl, without farther trouble, first complied, and then consented : not but that, after the first moment, reproaches and tears returned together — I can't tell whether

whether true or feigned; but, as it always happens, they ceased as soon as I began to give fresh cause for them. At last, from weakness to reproach, and from reproach to weakness, we separated, perfectly satisfied with each other, and equally agreed for the rendezvous this night.

I retired to my apartment at the dawn of day, quite exhausted with fatigue and sleep; yet I sacrificed one and the other to my inclination to be at breakfast in the morning. I am passionately fond of the next day's exhibition. You cannot conceive any thing like this. It was a confusion in the countenance, a difficulty in the walk, dejected eyes so swelled, and the round visage so lengthened, nothing could be so grotesque; and the mother, for the first time, alarmed at this sudden alteration, seemed to show a deal of affection for her; and the Presidente also, who seemed to be
much

much concerned for her. As to her cares, they are only lent ; for the day will come, and it is not far off, when they may be returned to her.

Adieu, my lovely friend !

OS. I, 17—.

L E T T E R XCVII.

CECILIA VOLANGES to the Marchioness de MERTEUIL.

AH, Madam ! I am the most miserable creature on earth ; my affliction is very great, indeed. To whom shall I fly for consolation ? or who will give me advice in my distress ? Mr. de Valmont and Danceny --- the very name of Danceny distracts me --- How shall I begin ? How shall I tell you ? --- I don't know how to go about it ; my heart is full --- I must, however,

ever,

ever, disburthen myself to some one ; and you are the only person in whom I can or dare confide ; you have been so kind to me. But I am no longer worthy of your friendship ; I will even say, I do not wish for it. Every one here has been uneasy about me, and they only augmented my grief ; I am so convinced I am unworthy of it. Rather scold me, abuse me, for I am guilty ; yet save me from ruin. If you do not compassionate and advise me, I shall expire of grief.

I must tell you then --- my hand shakes so, I can hardly hold the pen, and I am as red as scarlet ; but it is the blush of shame. Well, I will bear it, as the first punishment of my crime. I will relate the whole.

I must tell you that Mr. Valmont, who has always hitherto delivered me Mr. Danceny's letters, on a sudden discovered so much difficulty in it, that he would have the key of my cham-

chamber. I assure you, I was very much against it : but he wrote to Danceny about it ; and Danceny also insisted on it. It gives me so much pain to refuse him any thing, especially since our absence, which makes him so unhappy, that I consented ; not in the least suspecting what would be the consequence.

Yesterday Mr. Valmont made use of this key to get into my chamber while I was asleep. I so little expected such a visit, that I was greatly frightened at waking : but as he spoke to me instantly, I knew him, and did not cry out ; as I immediately thought he came to bring me a letter from Danceny. No such thing. He wanted to kiss me directly ; and while I was struggling, he contrived to do what I would not have suffered for the whole world. But he would have a kiss first ; which I was forced to comply with : for what could I do ? I endeavoured

deavoured to call out; but, besides that I could not, he told me, that if any one should come he would throw all the fault on me; which, indeed, was very easy to be done on account of the key. After that, he did not go away any more. Then he would have a second kiss; and I don't know how that was, but it gave me a strange perturbation; and after that it was still worse. At last, after --- but you must excuse me from telling the rest; for I am as unhappy as it is possible. But what I reproach myself most for, and that I can't help mentioning, is, I am afraid I did not make as much resistance as I could. I can't tell how it was, for certainly I don't love Mr. Valmont, but on the contrary; yet there were some moments that I was as if I lov'd him --- however, you may well think I always said no: but I was sensible I did not do as I said; and it was as if in spite of me; and I
 was,

was, moreover, in great trouble. If it is always so hard to defend one's self, one must be very well used to it. Mr. de Valmont speaks to one in such a way, that one does not know how to answer him: and would you believe it, when he went away I was vexed; and yet I was silly enough to consent to his coming again this night: that afflicts me more than all the rest.

Notwithstanding, I promise you I will prevent him from coming. He was hardly gone, but I found I did very wrong to promise him, and I cried all the rest of the time. My greatest trouble is about Danceny. Every time I think of him, my tears almost choak me, and I am always thinking of him --- and even now you may see the effect, for the paper is wet with my tears. I shall never be able to get the better of it, if it was only on his account. I was quite exhausted, and yet I could not close my eyes.

CONNECTIONS. 44

eyes. When I got up, and looked in the glass, I was enough to frighten one, I was so altered.

Mama perceived it as soon as I appeared, and asked me, what was the matter with me? I burst out crying immediately. I thought she would have chid me, and maybe that would not have been so distressing to me; however, it was quite otherwise; she spoke to me with great mildness, which I did not deserve. She desired I would not afflict myself so; but she did not know the cause of my distress; and that I should make myself sick. I often wish I was dead, I could hold out no longer. I flung myself in her arms, sobbing, and told her, "Ah, mama! your daughter is very unhappy." Mama could no longer contain herself, and wept a little. All this increased my sorrow. Fortunately she did not ask the reason;

D A N G E R O U S

for if she had, I should not know what to say.

I entreat you, dear Madam, to write to me as soon as possible, and inform me how I am to act; for I have no power to think of any thing, my affliction is so great. Please to inclose your letter to Mr. Valmont: but if you write to him at the same time, I entreat you not to mention a word of this.

I have the honour to be, with great friendship, Madam, your most humble and obedient servant.

I dare not sign this letter.

Oct. 1, 17—.

L E T.

L E T T E R XCVIII.

Madame de VOLANGES to the Marchioness de MERTEUIL.

A Few days ago you applied to me, my charming friend, for advice and consolation; it is now my turn, and I am to make the same request you made to me for myself. I am really in great affliction, and fear I have not taken the proper steps to avoid my present sorrow.

My uneasiness is on account of my daughter. Since our departure, I observed she was always dejected and melancholy; that I expected, and assumed a severity of behaviour which I judged necessary; flattering myself, that absence and dissipation would soon banish an affection, which I view-

ed as a childish error, rather than a deep-rooted passion: but I am disappointed in my expectations, and observe she gives way more and more to a dangerous dejection. I am seriously alarmed for her health. These few days past, particularly, there is a visible alteration in her; and yesterday she affected me very much, and alarmed us all.

The strongest proof I have of her being sensibly affected, is because I find that awe she always stood in of me is greatly diminished. Yesterday morning, on my only asking her if she was indisposed, she flung herself in my arms, saying, she was very unhappy, and sobbed and cried piteously. You can't conceive my grief; my eyes filled immediately; I had scarcely time to turn about, to prevent her seeing me. Fortunately, I had the prudence not to ask her any questions, and she did not venture to say any thing more; never-

nevertheless, I am confident it is this unhappy passion disturbs her.

What resolution to take, if it should last, I know not. Shall I be the cause of my child's unhappiness? Shall the most delicate sensations of the mind, tenderness and constancy, be employed against her? Is this the duty of a mother? Were I even to stifle the natural inclination that induces us to seek our children's happiness; should I call that weakness, which I am persuaded is the first, the most sacred duty? Should I force her inclinations, am I not answerable for the dreadful consequences that may ensue? What abuse of my maternal authority would it not be to place my daughter between guilt and misery!

My dear friend, I will not imitate what I have so often condemned. I was certainly authorised to chuse for my daughter; in that, I only assisted her with my experience: I did not

mean to use it as a right; I only fulfilled a duty, which I should have counteracted, had I disposed of her in contempt of an inclination which I could not prevent, the extent and duration of which neither she or I can foresee. No; she shall never marry Gercourt and love Daneeny; I will much rather expose my authority than her virtue.

I am, then, of opinion, it will be the most prudent way to recal my promise to M. de Gercourt. You have my reasons, which, I think, stronger than my promise. I will go farther; for as matters are circumstanced, by fulfilling my engagement I should in reality violate it: for if I am bound to keep my daughter's secret from M. de Gercourt, I am also bound not to abuse the ignorance I leave him in, and to act for him, as I believe he would act himself, was he better informed. Should I, then, injuriously

juriously deceive him, when he reposes his confidence in me, and, whilst he honours me with the title of mother, deceive him in the choice he makes for his children? Those reflections, so just in themselves, and which I cannot withstand, give me more uneasiness than I can express.

In contrast to the misfortunes I dread, I picture to myself my daughter happy in the choice her heart has made, fulfilling her duties with pleasure; my son-in-law, equally satisfied, daily congratulating himself on his choice; each enjoying the other's happiness, and both uniting to augment mine. Should, then, the prospect of so charming a futurity be sacrificed to vain motives? And what are those that restrain me? Interest only. Where is, then, the advantage of my daughter being born to a large fortune, if she is to be nevertheless the slave to that fortune? I will al-

low, that M. de Gercourt is, perhaps, a better match than I could have expected for my daughter; I will even own, I was much pleased when he made her his choice: but Danceny is of as good a family as he, and is nothing inferior to him in personal accomplishments; he has, moreover, the advantage over M. de Gercourt of loving and being beloved. He is not rich, it's true; but my daughter is rich enough for both. Ah! why should I deprive her the pleasure of making the fortune of the man she loves? Those matches of convenience, as they are called, where certainly every thing is convenient except inclination and disposition, are they not the most fruitful source of those scandalous rumours which are become so frequent? I would much rather defer matters a little. I shall have an opportunity to study my daughter's disposition, which as yet I

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am a stranger to. I have resolution enough to give her some temporary uneasiness, in order to make her enjoy some temporary happiness: but I will not risk making her miserable for ever.

Thus, my dear friend, I have related to you my afflictions, on which I beg your advice. Those severe subjects are a contrast to your amiable gaiety, and seem not at all adapted to your age; but your good sense outstrips your years. Your friendship will also aid your prudence; and I am confident, both will gratify the maternal anxiety that implores them.

Adieu, my dear friend! never doubt the sincerity of my sentiments.

Castle of —,

Oct. 2, 17—.

L E T T E R X C I X .

*Viscount de VALMONT to the Marchioness
de MERTEUIL.*

TRIFLING events still, my dear friend ; nothing of consequence ; no action ; scenes only ; therefore arm yourself with patience : you must take a large dose ; for whilst my Presidente goes such a slow pace, your pupil slides back, which is much worse : but I am of that happy temper, I can divert myself with all this nonsense. I really begin to be very comfortable here ; and can assure you, I have not experienced a tedious moment in my old aunt's melancholy castle. What could I wish for more than what I have, enjoyments, privations, hope, and incertitude ? What more is to be
had

had on a grand theatre? Why spectators. Ah! a little patience, they will not be wanting. If they do not see me at work, they shall at least see my work compleated; they will then have nothing to do but to admire and applaud: for they shall applaud. I can this instant with certainty foretell the moment of my austere devotee's fall. I this night assisted at the last agonies of her virtue; soft weakness has replaced it. I have fixed its epocha, at farthest, to our next interview: you will call this pride. He announces his victory before he has gained it! Softly; be calm! To give you a proof of my modesty, I will give you the history of my defeat.

Upon my word, your little pupil is a most ridiculous being. She is really a child, and should be treated as one; it would be of service to enjoin her a little penance. Would you believe it? after what passed between

as the day before yesterday, after the amicable manner in which we parted yesterday morning, I found her door locked on the inside when I came at night, as was agreed. What do you think of that? Those childish tricks are passable on the eve; but on the morrow is it not ridiculous? I did not, however, laugh at first; for never did I feel the ascendancy of my character more hurt. I went to this rendezvous without any incitement for pleasure, and merely through decency; my own bed, which I much wanted at that time, was preferable to any other, and I parted from it with some reluctance; yet when I met this obstacle I was all on fire to surmount it: I was humbled, to be sported with by a child. I was obliged to retire in very bad humour, fully resolved to have nothing more to do with this silly girl, or her matters. I immediately wrote her a note, which

I intended giving her this day, wherein I appreciated her as she deserved: but night bringing good counsel, as is said, I reflected this morning, that not having here a choice of dissipations, it was better to keep this, and suppressed my note. Since I have reflected on it, I can't reconcile it to myself to have had the idea of putting an end to an adventure before I had it in my power to ruin the heroine. What lengths will not a first emotion carry us to! Happy are those, my dear friend, who, like you, never accustom themselves to give way to it. I have deferred my revenge; and this sacrifice I make to your designs on Gercourt.

Now my wrath is subsided, I only see the ridiculousness of your pupil's behaviour. I should be fond to know what she expects to gain by it; for my part, I am at a loss: if it should be to make a defence, she is rather late.

late. She must explain this enigma to me one day or other, for I must be satisfied. It is only, perhaps, that she was fatigued; and really that may be the case; for certainly she does not yet know that the shafts of love, like the lance of Achilles, carry with them the remedy for the wounds they give. But no: I will engage by her little mien all day, that there is something like repentance; a something like virtue — virtue, indeed! — she is a pretty creature to pretend to virtue! Ah! she must leave that to the only woman who was truly born for it, knows how to embellish it, and make it revered. Your pardon, my dear friend: but this very evening it was that the scene between Madame de Tourvel and me happened, of which I am about giving you an account, and which has still left me in great emotion. It is not without some violence I endeavour to dissipate the impression

pression it has left on me ; it is even to assist it, I sit down to write to you : you must make some allowance for this first impulse.

For some days past Madame de Tourvel and I have been agreed about our sentiments, and we no longer dispute on any thing but words. It was always, *her friendship* that answered *my love* : but this conventional language made no alteration in the meaning of things. Had we even still remained so, I should not have gone on, perhaps, with so much dispatch, but with no less certainty. There was no longer any thought of putting me from hence, as was at first mentioned ; and as to our daily conversations, if I am solicitous to offer opportunities, she takes care not to let them slip.

It is usually in our walks our rendezvous occur ; the bad weather we had all day left no room for hope ; I was much disappointed at it, and did
not

not foresee how much it was in my favour. Not being able to walk, after dinner they sat down to cards; as I seldom play, and was not wanted, I retired to my room, with no other design than to wait till the party was over. I was returning to join the company, when the charming woman, who was going into her apartment, whether through weakness or imprudence, said in a soft manner, “Where are you going? There is no one in the saloon.” That was sufficient, you may believe, for me to endeavour to go in with her. I found less reluctance than expected: it’s true, I had the precaution to begin the conversation at the door on indifferent matters; but we were scarcely settled when I began the true one, and I spoke of my love to my friend. “Oh,” says she, “let us not speak of that here;” and trembled. Poor woman! she sees herself going.

Yes

Yet she was in the wrong to have had any terrors. For some time past being certain of success one day or other, and seeing her employ so much exertion in useless struggles, I resolved to reserve mine, and wait without effort her surrender from lassitude. You already know I must have a complete triumph, and that I will not be indebted to opportunity. It was even after the formation of this plan, and in order to be pressing without engaging too far, I reverted to the word love, so obstinately refused. Being assured my ardour was not questioned, I assumed a milder strain. This refusal no longer vexed me, it only afflicted me; my tender friend should give me some consolations. As she consoled me, one hand remained in mine, the lovely body rested on my arm, and we were exceeding close together. You must have certainly remarked, how much in such a situation

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tion, as the defence abates, the demands and refusals draw nearer ; how the head turns aside, the looks cast down, whilst the conversation, always pronounced in a weak tone, becomes scarce and interrupted. Those precious symptoms announce, in an unequivocal manner, the consent of the mind, but rarely has it reached the senses. I even think it always dangerous to attempt any enterprise of consequence ; because this state of abandonment being always accompanied with the softest pleasure, cannot be disturbed without ruffling the temper, which infallibly decides in favour of the defence.

But in the present case, prudence was so much more necessary, as I had every thing to dread from the forgetfulness of the danger: this abandonment would occasion to my tender passive devotee: and the avowal I solicited I did not even require to be
pro-

pronounced ; a look would suffice ; a single glance would crown my happiness.

My charming friend, those lovely eyes then were raised on me, that celestial mouth even pronounced — “ Well ; yes, I --- ” in an instant the look was extinct, the voice failed, and this adorable woman dropped in my arms. I had scarcely time to receive her, when disengaging herself with a convulsive force and wild look, her hands raised to heaven, she exclaimed, “ God — Oh, my God, save me ! ” and instantly, as quick as lightning, was on her knees ten paces from me. I could hear her almost suffocating. I came forward to assist her : but seizing my hands, which she bathed with her tears, sometimes embracing my knees, “ Yes it is you,” said she, “ it is you
“ will save me ; you do not wish my
“ death ; leave me ; save me ; leave
“ me ; for God’s sake ! leave me : ”
and

and those incoherent expressions were brought out with most affecting sobs; yet still she held me so strong I could not get from her; however, making an effort, I rais'd her in my arms: instantly her tears ceas'd, she could not speak, her joints stiffened, and violent convulsions succeeded this storm.

I must own, I was exceedingly moved, and believe I should have complied with her request, if the circumstances had not even obliged me to it. But this much is certain; after having given her some assistance, I left her, as she desired; and I am well pleased with myself for it. I have already received almost my reward.

I expected, as on the first day of my declaration, I should not see her any more for the evening; but she came down to the saloon about eight, and only told the company she had been much indisposed: her countenance

nance was dejected, her voice weak, her deportment composed, but her look mild, and often fixed on me. — As she declined playing, I was obliged to take her seat, and she placed herself beside me. During supper she remained alone in the saloon. At our return, I thought I perceived she had been crying: to be satisfied, I told her I was afraid she still felt some uneasiness from her disorder, to which she obligingly answered, “ Her disorder would not go so quickly as it came.” At last, when we retired, I gave her my hand, and at the door of her apartment, she very forcibly squeez’d mine: it is true, this motion seemed to me to be involuntary; so much the better; it is a stronger proof of my power.

I am confident she is now happy to have gone such a length; all expences are paid; nothing now remains but enjoyment. Perhaps now, whilst I
am

am writing to you, she is possessed with the soft idea ; but, if she should even be engaged in a new scheme of defence, you and I know how such projects end. Now let me ask you, can things be put off longer than our next interview ? I expect there will be some forms to be settled ; but, the first difficulties surmounted, do those austere prudes know where to stop ? Their affections are real explosions ; resistance gives them strength ; my untractable devotee would run after me, if I ceas'd running after her.

At length, my lovely friend, I shall soon call on you for the performance of your promise ; you undoubtedly remember our agreement after my success ; this trifling infidelity to your Chevalier. — Are you ready ? I wish for it as passionately as if I had never known you. However, knowing you is, perhaps, a stronger motive for wishing for it.

I

I am

I am just, and no galant.*

It shall be the first infidelity I shall commit against my solemn conquest; and, I promise you, I will embrace the first pretence to be absent from her four and twenty hours: that shall be her punishment for having kept me so long distant from her: It is now more than two months I have been taken up with this adventure: ay, two months and three days, including to-morrow, as it will not be really consummated until then. This brings to my memory, that Mademoiselle B—— held out three compleat months. I am pleased to find sheer coquetry can make a longer defence than austere virtue.

Adieu, charmer! I must leave off, for it is very late. This letter has led me farther than I intended; but, as

* Voltaire's comedy of Nanine.

I send

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I send to Paris to-morrow, I would not miss the opportunity of letting you partake a day sooner of your friend's good success.

Oct. 2, 17—, at Night.

L E T T E R C.

*The Viscount de VALMONT to the
Marchioness de MERTEUIL.*

MY dear friend! I am betrayed, bubbled, ruined; I am enraged beyond expression: Madame de Tourvel is gone off. She is gone, and I knew nothing of it! I was not in the way to oppose her, to reproach her with her base treachery! Do not imagine I should have let her go quietly; she should have staid, had I been even obliged to have used force. Fool as I was! I slept peaceably, wrapt in a credulous

credulous security ! I slept whilst the thunder struck me ! I cannot conceive the meaning of this abrupt departure ; I will for ever renounce the knowledge of women.

When I recall the transactions of yesterday ! — or rather the evening — the melting look, the tender voice, the squeezing the hand — all the while planning her flight. — Oh ! woman, woman ! complain, then, if you are deceived ! Yes, every kind of treachery that is employed against you is a robbery committed on you.

With what rapture shall I be revenged ! I shall again meet this perfidious woman ; I will resume my power over her. If love has been sufficient to furnish the means, what is it not capable of when assisted with revenge ? I shall again see her at my knees, trembling, and bath'd in tears ! calling on me for pity with her deceitful voice ; and I will have none for her.

What is she now doing? What can she think of? Perhaps applauding herself for having deceived me; and, true to the genius of her sex, enjoys that pleasure in the highest degree. What her boasted virtue could not effect, deceit has accomplished without a struggle; it was her dissimulation I should have dreaded. — Then, to be obliged to stifle my resentment; to be obliged to affect a tender sorrow, when my heart is possessed with rage. Reduced to supplicate a rebellious woman, who has withdrawn herself from my obedience! Ought I then be so much humbled? And by whom? By a weak woman, who was never accustomed to resist! What avails my having possession of her heart, having inflamed it with the whole fire of love, having raised her feelings even to intoxication; if, calm in her retreat, she can now be prouder of her flight than I
of

of my victories? And must I bear this? My dear friend, you will not believe it; you will not, surely, have such a humiliating opinion of me!

What fatality attaches me to this woman? Are there not a hundred others who wish I would pay attention to them, and eagerly accept it? If even none were so enchanting, the charms of variety, the allurements of new conquests: the splendour of the number; do not they afford a plentiful harvest of soft pleasures? Why, then, do I run madding after this one that flies me, and neglect those that offer? I am at a loss to account for it, but so it is. — There is no happiness, no repose for me, until I possess this woman, whom I love and hate with equal rage. I shall not be able to support my fate until I have disposed of her's: then, tranquil and satiated, I shall behold her a prey to the ravages I now experience, and will raise

a thousand others ; hope and fear, diffidence and security, all evils the offspring of hatred, all the gifts that love can bestow, shall alternately engross her heart at my will. The time will come——But what labours have I not yet to encounter ? — How near was I yesterday, and how distant to-day ! How am I to regain the ground I have lost ? I dare not undertake any one step : to come to some resolution I should be calm, and my blood boils in my veins.

The calm serenity with which every one replies to my demands on this extraordinary, on this uncommon event, and its cause, adds to my torments.— No one knows the reason ; none seem to give themselves the least uneasiness about it ; it scarcely would have been mentioned, could I have started any other subject. I flew to Madame de Rosemonde the moment I heard the news, who replied, with
the

the natural indifference of old age, it was the consequence of the indisposition Madame de Tourvel had suffered yesterday : she dreaded a fit of illness, and wished to be at home ; a resolution she did not think proper to oppose, as she would have done on a similar occasion ; as if the contrast was applicable, — between her who should think of nothing but futurity, and the other, who is the delight and torment of my life.

Madame de Volanges, who I had suspected at first of being an accomplice, seems dissatisfied for not having been consulted on this occasion. I must own I am very well pleased she has been disappointed of the pleasure of prejudicing me ; which is still a stronger proof she has not the confidence of this woman so much as I dreaded : that is an enemy the less. How would she have exulted, did she know she fled from me ! How intole-

rable her pride, had it been the consequence of her advice ! To what an immensity would her importance have been raised ! Good God ! how I detest her ! — Yes, I will renew my connection with the daughter, and initiate her in her business : I believe I shall stay here some time ; I am at present inclined to this measure, in the tumult of reflections that crowd on me.

Don't you, really now, think, after so extraordinary a proceeding, my ungrateful fair one should dread me ? If she imagines I shall pursue her, she will not fail to prevent my admission ; and, I can assure you, I am as little inclined to permit her such a custom, as to bear such an insult. I had much rather she should be told I remain here ; I will even strenuously press her to return again : then, when she is fully convinced I am far from her, I will suddenly come to her house, and
abide

abide the effect of my scheme. — That it may have its full force, it must not be hurried; still I will not answer for my impatience: twenty times this day was I tempted to call for my horses. I will contain myself, however, and wait your answer here; I only request, my lovely friend, you will not let me wait long for it.

What hurts me most is to be ignorant of what happens: my fellow, who is at Paris, has a claim on her waiting maid; he may be serviceable; I send him money, and his instructions. Permit me to include both in this letter, and request to have them delivered into his hand by some of your servants: this precaution is the more necessary, as the scoundrel has a trick of never receiving any letters I write him on business he finds troublesome; and, at this period, he does not seem to be quite so enraptured with his girl as I could wish him.

E 4

Adieu,

Adieu, my lovely friend! If a happy thought should strike you, or any means of bringing me speedily to action, lose not a moment. I have often experienced your friendship ; I forcibly experience it now, for I am more serene since I sat down to write. I speak, at least, to one who comprehends me, not to the inanimate beings with whom I vegetate since this morning. On my word, the more I proceed, the more I am inclined to think we are the only couple worth any thing in this life.

Oct. 3, 17—

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LETTER CL

*The Viscount de VALMONT to AZOLAN,
his Huntsman.*

(Inclosed in the foregoing.)

YOU must be a stupid fellow, indeed, to set out this morning, and not have known that Madame de Tourvel was going away also; or, if you knew it, not to have given me notice. To what purpose is it, then, you spend my money, if you only get drunk with the men, and loiter your time in courting the waiting maids, if you do not give me better information of what is going forward? — This is entirely owing to your negligence; therefore, I now give you notice, if such another happens in this business, it shall be the last you will be guilty of in my service.

E 5

You

You must inform me of every thing that happens at Madame de Tourvel's, relative to her health; whether she sleeps well; whether she is melancholy or chearful; if she goes abroad often, and where; if she sees much company, and who goes there; how she passes her time; whether she is out of temper with her women, particularly the one that was with her here; how she employs her time when alone; if, when she reads, she is composed, or stops to muse; and the same when she writes. Remember, also, to make a friend of whoever carries the letters to the post office: often do that business for him; and, when he accepts it, send away only those you think of no consequence, and send me the rest, especially those for Madame de Volanges, if there should be any.

Settle your matters so as to be still the favourite of Julia. If she has
I another,

another, as you thought, bring her to consent to share her favours; and do not be so ridiculous as to give yourself airs of jealousy: you will be only circumstanced as your superiors; but, if your rival should be troublesome, or if you perceive he takes up too much of Julia's time in the day, so that she should not be so often with her mistress, to observe her, you must, by some means or other, drive him away, or pick a quarrel with him; do not be afraid of the consequences, — I will support you: above all, leave the house as little as possible; for it is by assiduity only you can make your observations with certainty. If, by chance, any of the servants should be discharged, offer yourself in their room, as if no longer in my service: in such case, you must say you left me to get into a more quiet and regular service. Endeavour, as much as possible, to be

hired ; I shall, notwithstanding, keep you still in mine during the time ; and you will be as you was before at the Duchess of ———, and Madame de Tourvel will also reward you in the end.

If you was zealous and skilful, those instructions should be sufficient : but, to assist one and the other, I send you some money : the enclosed bill on my steward entitles you to call on him for twenty-five louis, for I suppose you have no money. You will make use of as much as is necessary, to prevail on Julia to settle a correspondence with me ; the remainder to treat the servants : let it be as often as you can in the porter's lodge, that he may like to see you. However, do not forget, it is your services I mean to pay, and not your pleasures.

Accustom Julia, betimes, to observe and report every thing, even what she may think the most trifling ; it is better
better

CONNECTIONS. 43

better she should write ten useless lines, than omit a material one; and what often appears a matter of indifference, is quite otherwise. As I must be instantly informed, if any thing should happen you think of consequence after you receive this letter, send off Philip directly on the message horse, to fix himself at ****, and remain there until farther orders; it will be a stage in case of necessity; but, for common correspondence, the post will be sufficient.

Take great care not to lose this letter; read it over every day; not only not to forget any thing, but also to be certain you have it. Do, in a few words every thing you ought, now I honour you with my confidence. You very well know, if I am satisfied with your conduct, you shall be satisfied with me.

Oct. 3, 17—

L E T.

L E T T E R . C H.

*The Presidente de TOURVEL to Madame
de ROSEMONDE.*

YOU will be very much surprized, dear Madam, to learn I quitted your house so precipitately: this proceeding will, doubtless, appear very extraordinary; but how will your astonishment be increased, when you shall know my reasons! You will, perhaps, imagine, when I confide them to you, I have not paid proper attention to the respect the necessary tranquility of your age commands; that I am insensible to the sentiments of veneration you are so justly entitled to from me. Ah! forgive me, Madam! my heart is oppressed; it seeks to pour out its distress into the friendly bosom of prudence

dence and mildness : — where could it find it but with you? Look upon me as your child ; take a maternal compassion on me ; I implore it ; my sentiments for you may give me a claim to it.

The time is fled, when, wholly possessed with those laudable ideas, I knew not these I now experience, which ravage the soul, and deprive me of the power of resistance, whilst they impose its necessity ! Ah ! this fatal visit has undone me !

What can I say ? — I love, — yes, I love to distraction ! Alas ! this fatal word, which now I write for the first time, — this word, so often solicited but never granted, my life should now expiate to let him hear who has inspired it ; yet I must ever refuse ! He will remain doubtful of the sentiments I feel for him. — I am miserable ! — Oh, that he could as readily read my heart as rule it ! — I should
suffer

suffer less if he but knew what I endure ; but even you, my venerable friend, can have but a faint idea of my sufferings.

I shall in a few minutes fly him, and load him with affliction. He will think me near him, and I shall be far from him. — At the usual hour of seeing him every day, I shall be in places unknown to him, and where he cannot come : every thing is prepared full in my view, and all announce my unhappy flight : all is ready but me ! — and the more my heart recoils, the more I am convinced of the necessity of submitting to my fate. — I must submit ; it is better to die than live in guilt : already I feel my criminality ; modesty only is preserved, but virtue is vanished : — what yet is left me, I must acknowledge, is due to his generosity. Intoxicated with pleasure, seeing and listening to him, enraptured in his arms,

arms, and the greatest of all extacy, that of making him happy, I was divested of strength or power ; scarce any left to struggle, but none to resist ; I shuddered at my danger, but had not power to fly : — he saw my sufferings, and had compassion on me. — Must I not cherish him to whom I owe more than life !

Had that been my only care, remaining with him, do not imagine I should ever have thought of going ! for what is life without him ? Happy should I have been to die for him ! But, condemned to be the cause of his misery and my own, without daring to complain, or console him ; to be daily exposed to struggle, not only against him, but also against myself ; to employ my cares to bring him to anguish, when I would devote my days to make him happy : such a life is worse than a thousand deaths ; yet this is to be my fate : I will still
refo-

resolutely bear up against it. And do you, who I have chosen for a mother, receive my solemn vow to observe it.

Receive also another, of never concealing any of my actions from you. I beseech you to accept it. I demand it as a necessary aid to my conduct. I shall be engaged to relate you all; I shall think myself in your presence; your virtue will assist my weakness. I will never consent to shame in your sight; and by means of this powerful restraint, whilst I cherish the indulgent friend, the confidant of my weakness, I shall reverence my tutelar angel that guards me from shame.

It is experiencing it too fatally, to be compelled to this requisition. Oh, the unhappy effect of presumptuous confidence! Why did I not oppose sooner this growing inclination? Why did I flatter myself with being able to conquer it at my pleasure? Senseless wretch! Little did I know the power
of

of love! Ah! had I struggled against it with more care, it would not have overpowered me. This sudden departure would have been unnecessary; or, even being compelled to this painful step, I might not have been forced to break a connection, which might have been less frequent. But to lose all at once, and for ever!—Oh, my dear friend!—I forget myself, and again wander in criminal wishes. Let us part; and, at least, let me expiate by my sacrifice those involuntary injuries.

Adieu, most respectable friend! Love me as a daughter; adopt me as one; and be assured, notwithstanding my weakness, I would rather die than be unworthy that name.

*Oct. 3, 17—,
One in the morning.*

L E T.

L E T T E R CIII.

*Madame de ROSEMOND to the Presi-
dente de TOURVEL.*

I WAS more afflicted, my lovely dear, at your departure, than surprized at the cause; long experience, and my concern for you, had sufficiently informed me the state of your heart; and to sum up all, you have told me almost nothing in your letter but what I feared. Was I to depend on it for information, I should still be ignorant who it is you love; for in speaking of *him* all the time, you never once mention his name, . It was not necessary; too well I know who it is. This I remark only, because I recollect, it always has been the language of love. I see things are the same as they were formerly.

I little

I little imagined my thoughts would ever be called back to things so foreign to my age, and so much out of my memory. Since yesterday, however, my mind has been much taken up with it, in order to find out something that may be useful to you. What can I then do, but admire and pity you? I am charmed with your proceeding; yet terrified because you thought it indispensable; and when things have gone so far, it is a difficult matter to avoid those our hearts are continually drawing us towards.

However, you must not be discouraged; nothing is impossible to such a virtuous mind; and were you ever to yield, (which God forbid!) you will at least, my lovely dear, have the consolation of having resisted with all your might; moreover, what human wisdom cannot accomplish, the divine grace operates when it pleases. You are, perhaps, now at the eve of your deli-

deliverance; and your virtue, which has been tried in those dreadful conflicts, will arise more pure and refined. The strength which forsakes you to-day, you must hope for to-morrow. Do not, however, depend on it; use it only as an incentive to encourage you to employ all your own.

Leaving to Providence the care of assisting you in a danger where I can bring no prevention, I reserve to myself that of supporting and consoling you as much as in my power. I cannot relieve your troubles, but I will share them. On those conditions I will accept your confidence. I know your heart wants to be disburthened; I offer you my own; age has not so far frozen it, as to leave it insensible to friendship: you will always find it open to receive you. This is a poor relief to your distress, but you shall not, however, weep alone; and when
this

this unhappy passion overpowers you, and obliges you to speak, it will be better it should be with me than *him*. Now I speak as you do; and I believe between us both we shall not be able to name him, but we understand each other.

I do not know whether I do right in telling you he appeared amazingly affected at your sudden departure; it would, perhaps, be better not to mention it: but I am not fond of that prudence that afflicts one's friends. I am obliged to stop short on that subject; for the weakness of my sight and a trembling hand will not indulge long letters, when I am under the necessity of writing them myself.

Adieu, my lovely dear! Adieu, my amiable child! I adopt you freely as a daughter. You have every accomplishment to fill a mother's heart with pride and pleasure.

Oct. 3, 17—.

L E T-

L E T T E R CIV.

The Marchioness de MERTEUIL to Madame de VOLANGES.

IT was with some difficulty, my dear worthy friend, I could suppress an impulse of pride on reading your letter. You honour me, then, with your full confidence; you even condescend to ask my advice. I should be completely happy if I merited this favourable opinion; or, that it did not proceed from the prepossession of your friendship. Whatever may be the motive, it is so flattering, that having obtained it, I shall endeavour more ardently to deserve it. I shall then, but without presuming to advise, tell you freely my thoughts. I own I am diffident of them, as they differ from
your's ;

your's; yet, when you have my reasons, you will then judge, and if they should not meet with your approbation, I declare beforehand I submit. I shall, at least, be so prudent as not to think myself wiser than you. However, for this once, if my opinion should have the preference, you will find the cause in the facility of maternal fondness. With you we must look for so laudable an inclination, and readily recognize it in the measure you are inclined to embrace. Thus if you sometimes err, it is always on the side of virtue.

When we are to decide on the lot of others, but more especially, when the question is to fix it by a sacred and indissoluble band, such as marriage, prudence, I think, ought to take place of all other considerations. It is then an equally wise and tender mother should, as you well observe, *assist her daughter with her own expe-*

science. I ask then, how is she to attain it, but by making a distinction between what is pleasing and what convenient.

Would it not be debasing maternal authority, nay even annihilating it, to make it subservient to a frivolous inclination, whose illusive power is felt only by those that dread it, and immediately vanishes when contemptuously treated? For my part, I must own I never believed in those irresistible, impetuous passions, which one would imagine the world has adopted, as an universal excuse for their irregularities. I cannot conceive how a passion, that one moment creates, and the next destroys, can overpower the unalterable principles of chastity, decency and modesty; nor how a woman, that has relinquished them, can be justified by a pretended passion, no more than a robber for a thirst for money, or a murderer for a desire of revenge.

revenge. Where is the person who has not had their struggles? I have been always persuaded, inclination was sufficient for resistance, and experience has confirmed my opinion. Of what estimation would virtue be, without the obligations it imposes? Its worship are our sacrifices, its reward in our hearts. Those incontestable truths can be denied only by those whose interest it is to forget them; and who being already contaminated, hope to carry on the illusion, and justify their bad conduct by worse reasoning.

But is this to be apprehended from an innocent timid child; from a child of your's, whose pure and modest education is strengthened by a happy disposition? Still it is to this apprehension, which I will venture to call very humiliating for your daughter, you would give up an advantageous match your prudence had provided. I have

a great friendship for Danceny; and you know for some time past I have seldom seen M. de Gercourt: but my friendship for the one, nor my indifference for the other, can prevent me from observing the immense difference between the two matches.

As to birth, I agree with you, they are on an equality: but the one is deficient in fortune, and the other's is such as, exclusive of blood, is sufficient to raise him to the highest employments. I acknowledge, happiness may be independant of fortune; but we must also own it a very necessary ingredient. You say, Mademoiselle de Volanges is rich enough for both; yet sixty thousand livres per annum, which she is to possess, will not be too much for one who bears the name of Danceny, to furnish and keep up a house suitable to it. Those are not Madame de Sévigné's days. Luxury absorbs every thing; we
blame,

blame, yet imitate it ; and our superfluities end in depriving us of necessities. As to personal accomplishments, which you with great reason dwell much on, certainly on that point M. de Gercourt is irreproachable, which he has already proved. I am fond of thinking, and really believe Danceny is not his inferior ; but are we so certain of it ? It is true, hitherto he appears untainted with the follies of the age, and notwithstanding the ton of the day, he shows a taste for good company, which inclines one to judge favourably of him. Yet who knows whether this apparent discretion is not the result of the mediocrity of his income ? To be a gamester or a libertine, money must be had ; or if there should be a tincture of knavery or epicurism, one may be fond of the defects, and still dread their excess. There are thousands who are admitted into good company

because they have no other employment.

I do not say, God forbid I should ! that I believe such things of him : yet there is some danger ; and if the event should not answer your expectations, how you would reproach yourself ! What reply could you make to your daughter, who would probably say, “ Mother, I was young and
“ unexperienced ; I was even led
“ astray by an error excusable at
“ my age : Providence, which had
“ foreseen my incapacity, had given
“ me a prudent mother to preserve
“ me. How is it then, that laying
“ your discretion aside, you have con-
“ sented to make me unhappy ? Was
“ I to chuse a husband, I who knew
“ nothing of a married state ? If even
“ I was determined on it, should you
“ not have opposed it ? But I never
“ was possessed with that foolish self
“ will. Determined to obey you, I
“ waited

“ waited with respectful veneration
 “ your choice. Did I ever swerve
 “ from my submission? Yet now I
 “ suffer the afflictions due to rebel-
 “ lious children only. Your weak-
 “ nefs has been my ruin.” Perhaps
 her respect might stifle those com-
 plaints : but your maternal love would
 discover them ; and your daughter’s
 tears, though concealed, would still
 overwhelm your heart.

Where then will you seek consola-
 tion ? Will it be in this ridiculous
 passion, against which you should have
 guarded her, by which you even suffer
 yourself to be seduced ?

Perhaps I may, my dear friend,
 conceive too strong a prejudice against
 this attachment : I view it in a for-
 midable light, even in case of a mar-
 riage. Not that I disapprove a de-
 cent and pure intention should em-
 bellish the matrimonial bands, to sof-
 ten in some measure the obligations it

requires: but he is not the man appointed to tie them; it is not an illusory moment that ought to regulate our choice for life: for to choose well, we ought to compare; how then is it possible, when our imaginations are engrossed by a sole object; when that object cannot even be investigated, as we are plunged in intoxication and blindness? I have often, I assure you, fallen in with women attacked by this dangerous disorder; some of them I have been in confidence with: hear them speak, their lovers were in every degree all perfection; but those perfections were confined to their imaginations only: Their exalted ideas dress at pleasure those they prefer; they dream of nothing but excellence and virtue; it is the drapery of an angel often worn by an abject model: be him as he may, they have no sooner adorned him, than, dupes to their

their own labour, they fall down and adore him.

Your daughter, then, does not love Danceny, or, she is fascinated by this same illusion; and if they mutually love, they both experience the same. Thus your reason for uniting them is reduced to a certainty that they do not know each other, but also, that they never can know each other. I think I hear you say, "Can M. de Gercourt and my daughter know each other better?" No, certainly; but at least they do not mistake themselves; they are not sufficiently acquainted together. What then happens between a couple that I suppose decent? Why they study to please, observe, seek, and find out soon what inclinations or desires they must relinquish, for their mutual tranquillity. Those small self denials give but little uneasiness, as they are foreseen, and are reciprocal; they are soon converted

verted into mutual good will ; and custom, which ever strengthens all inclinations it does not destroy, gradually leads to that sincere friendship, that tender confidence, which, when united with esteem, forms, I think, the true solid happiness of the married state.

The illusions of love, I will allow, are more engaging ; but don't we well know they are not so lasting ? And what dangers does not their destruction bring on ! Then the most trivial faults become shocking and intollerable, being contrasted with the ideas of perfection which had seduced us. Each then thinks the other is only altered, and they themselves of as much worth as in the first instant the error took its rise. They are astonished they can no longer create the charm they experienced ; they are humbled ; vanity is hurt, the mind is soured, injuries augmented, which bring on peevishness,

ness, and is succeeded by hatred ; thus frivolous pleasures are repaid by long misfortunes.

I have now given you, my dear friend, my thoughts on this subject. I do not insist on them, only lay them before you : — you are to decide. Should you persist in your opinion, I shall only beg to know the reasons that combat mine. I shall be happy to be set right by you, and, above all, to be made easy on the fate of that lovely child, whose happiness I so ardently wish, not only for my particular friendship for her, but also for that which unites me to you for ever.

Paris, Oct. 4, 17—.

L E T T E R C V.

The Marchioness de MERTEUIL to
CECILIA VOLANGES.

WELL, my dear little creature, you are very much vexed and ashamed; and this same Valmont is a wicked man, is he not? How is all this? He dared behave to you as he would to the woman he loved best! He has taught you what you was going mad to know! Upon my word, such proceedings are unpardonable. And you, like a good girl, would have kept your chastity for your lover, who would not attempt it; you cherish the torments of love only, but not its pleasures. Why this is charming; and you will make a conspicuous figure in a romance. Love, misfortunes,
I and

and virtue in abundance ! Lord ! what a deal of fine things ! In the midst of this brilliant train, it is true, one may have nothing to do, but they may repay themselves.

How the poor little thing is to be pitied ! her eyes were sunk the next morning ! What will you say, then, when your lover's will be so ? My dear angel, you will not be always so ; all men are not Valmonts : and again ; not dare lift up your eyes ! Oh, there you was very right ; every one would have read your adventure in them. Believe me, however, if it was so, our women and our young ladies even would assume more modest countenances.

Notwithstanding the praises you perceive I am obliged to give you, yet you must agree you failed in your master piece, which was to tell all to your mama. You had begun so well ; you had flung yourself in her arms ;
you

you sobbed and cried. What a pathetic scene ! What a pity you did not compleat it ! Your tender mama, overjoyed, and to assist your virtue, would have shut you up in a convent for life ; and there you might have loved Danceny as much as you pleased, without a rival, and without any sin ; you might be afflicted at your leisure ; Valmont would not certainly have come to trouble your affliction with his naughty amusements.

But seriously, is it possible to be so childish, and turned of fifteen, as you are ! You are much in the right to say, you are scarcely worthy my care ; yet I wish to be your friend : you want one with the mother you have, and the husband she intends for you ; but if you do not improve more, what can one make of you ? What can be hoped, if what gives girls sense and understanding, deprives you of them.

If

If you could once bring yourself to reflect for a moment, you would soon discover, you should rather congratulate yourself than grieve: but you are ashamed; and that hurts you. Compose yourself; the shame that follows love is like the pain; you suffer it but once. It may be feigned afterwards, but is never felt: and yet the pleasure remains, and you will own that is of consequence. I think I can even pick out among your nonsense, you lay some stress on it. Come, be honest; that uneasiness that prevented *you from doing as you said*; that made you find it *so difficult to struggle*; that made you, as it were, *vexed*, when Valmont went away; was it shame or pleasure occasioned it? And *his manner of speaking*, to which one did not know how to answer, did it not proceed from *his manner of doing*? Ah, little girl! you tell a lie to your friend; that's not right: but enough of that.

What above every thing to any one else is nothing more than pleasure, in your situation is real happiness. Being so circumstanced with a mother, whose affection is of so much importance, and a lover whom you wish ever to enjoy, can you not plainly see the only means to unite successfully those opposite interests is to bring in a third ? Drawn off by this new adventure, whilst you will seem to your mama to sacrifice submissively to her will, a passion that was not agreeable to her, you will establish with your lover the honour of having made a fine resistance. Assuring him constantly of your affections, you must not grant him the convincing proofs. Those refusals, which are so trifling in your situation, he will not fail to attribute to virtue ; he may, perhaps, repine, but his love will increase ; and to enjoy the double merit of sacrificing to the one your affection, and
to

to the other only to resist its force, it will cost nothing more than the enjoyment of its delights. How many women have lost their reputation, who would have anxiously preserved it, had they such a field.

Does not this scheme appear the most feasible as well as the most delightful to you? Do you know what you have got by the one you have taken? Your mama attributed your immoderate grief to your increase of love, and was so enraged, that she only waited to be convinced, in order to punish you. I have just received a letter from her. She will attempt every method to extract the avowal from yourself. She writes me, she may, perhaps, even go so far as to propose Danceny to you for a husband, and this only to make you speak out. If, seduced by this affectation of tenderness, you should open your heart, she would shut you
up

up for a long time, perhaps, for ever, to deplore at leisure your blind credulity.

This scheme she intends to execute against you must be counteracted by another. Begin, then, to be more chearful, to make her believe you do not think so much of Danceny. She will be the more easily prevailed on to believe it, as it is the usual effect of absence ; and she will be the more pleased with you, as she will applaud herself for her prudence which suggested the method. If she should still have her doubts, should persist in founding you, and should come to mention matrimony, abide, like a prudent girl, in your absolute submission for you risk nothing ; as to a husband, one is always as good as another ; the most troublesome is not more so than a mother.

When your mama is once better pleased, she will have you married ;
then

then, being more free in your proceedings, you can, if you please, quit Valmont to have Danceny, or even keep both; for observe, Danceny is agreeable, it is true, but he is one of those men one can have when they please, and as often as they please; so you may be easy as to him. Not so with Valmont; it is dangerous to quit him, and difficult to keep him; one must be very skilful, or very tractable: if you could, however, attach him as a friend, you would be happy indeed. He would elevate you to the first rank among the mollish women; that is, the way to gain consistency in life, and not sit blushing and crying as if your guns had made you eat your dinner on your knees.

If you are prudent, you will then endeavour to make it up with Valmont, who must be very angry with you: as you must learn to repair your folly.

folly, do not be afraid to make him some advances ; you will soon learn, that although the men make the first to us, we are always obliged to make the second. You will have a pretence for it, for you must not keep this letter ; and I require you will deliver it to Valmont as soon as you have read it. Do not forget to seal it again, however, before you give it : for, in the first place, I want to leave the whole merit of this proceeding to yourself, that it should not carry the appearance of an advice ; moreover, I do not know any one I have so much friendship for, as to write as I do to you.

Adieu ! my charming angel ! follow my advice, and let me know how it succeeds.

P. S. Now I think on't, I had like to forget — A word more — Take a little more care in your stile of writing ;
you

you always write so like a child;— I know from whence it proceeds; you always write as you think, but do not study what you ought to say: that may do very well between you and me, who should not have any secrets from one another; but with every one else, particularly with your lover, it looks so foolish. You must observe, when you write to any one, it is for them, and not for yourself: you must endeavour, then, to write to please them, and not give them your thoughts.

Adieu! my heart! I embrace you, instead of being angry, in hopes you will be more rational.

Paris, Oct. 4, 17—

LET-

L E T T E R C V I.

*The Marchioness de MERTEUIL to
the Viscount de VALMONT.*

ADMIRABLE, my dear Viscount !
now I love you to distraction ; after the first of your two letters, I might well expect the second, which did not much surprize me ; although you were so proud of your future success as to solicit the reward, and ask me if I was ready, I foresaw there was no necessity for all that expedition. Yes, upon honour, perusing the recital of your tender scene, that had *affected you so much* ; and reflecting on your modesty, worthy the most glorious days of chivalry, I exclaimed, “ The opportunity is lost ! ” How could it be otherwise ?
What

What would you have a poor woman do, who surrenders, and will not be accepted? Why, faith, in such a circumstance, appearances must be saved, and that is only what your Presidente has done. For my part, I very well know, the step she has taken has its effect, and intend to follow the example on the first serious occasion that offers; but I swear, if whoever I take this trouble for does not make a better use of it than you have done, he may certainly renounce me for ever.

Thus are you reduced, positively, to a meer nothing! by two women, one of which was fixed for the next day, and the other wished for nothing so much! Well, you will be apt to think I boast, and say it is easy to prophecy after the event; but I swear I expected it; for you really have no genius for your profession; you barely know what you have learned; you have no invention;
when

when circumstances do not assist your formalities of custom, and you are obliged to go out of the common road, you stop short like a school-boy; to sum up all, a childishness on the one hand, a return of prudery on the other, because they are not every day experienced, are enough to disconcert you; you neither know how to remedy or prevent them. Ah, Viscount! Viscount! you teach me not to judge men by their success, and we must soon say of you, "he was "brave such a day." When you commit blunder on blunder, why then you fly to me — One would imagine I have nothing else to do but retrieve your follies: it is certainly work enough for any one person.

However, as to those two adventures; the one was undertaken contrary to my inclination, — the other, as you have paid some attention to my wishes, I take on myself.

Read

Read first the inclosed letter, then give it to the little Volanges; it is more than sufficient to recal her; but I beg you will pay some attention to this child; let us join together to make her the greatest curse and affliction of her mother and Gercourt: there is no danger in giving her large doses; I see plainly the little thing will not be frightened; and, our scheme once compleated, she may act as she pleases.

I shall be totally unconcerned about her. I had some thoughts of making her a subaltern intriguer, to take her to play the second parts under me; but I perceive she has no genius; she has a kind of foolish openness that has not given way to the specific you administered, which, however, seldom fails; and, in my opinion, it is the most dangerous disorder a woman can possibly have; it marks, more than any thing, a weakness of temper, which

opposes every thing, and which is almost always incurable ; so that our time would be lost in forming this little girl for intrigue, as, at best, she never will be more than a comestable woman. I don't know any thing so insipid, as that stupid facility, that makes a woman compliant without knowing why or wherefore, only because she is attacked, and knows not how to resist ; those sort of women are absolutely mere machines. You will say, that is all we want ; and that is sufficient for our purpose. Be it so : but it must not be forgot, that every one soon becomes acquainted with the springs and contrivers of those machines ; so that to use this one, without bad consequences, we must lose no time, stop when necessary, and afterwards break it. We shall not be at a loss to get rid of her, and Gercourt will be ready to cloister her when we please. When he can no longer

longer doubt his disaster, when it will be public and notorious, what matters it us if he revenges himself, provided he is inconsolable? What I say of the husband, I dare say you think the same of the mother; therefore look it as done.

This measure, which I conceive to be the best, attracted my thoughts, made me resolve to lead on the young thing briskly, as you will perceive by my letter; it is also of the utmost consequence not to leave any thing in her possession that may commit us, which I beg you will attend to. This precaution observed, I take the morality on myself; the remainder is in your department; however, if we should hereafter find she improves, we shall always have time to alter our plan; which had like to have been the case, and that we should one time or other have been employed at what we are

now about ; but at all events our labour will not be lost.

I must, however, tell you, mine had like to be destroyed ; and Ger-court's good fortune had nearly overpowered my prudence. Madame de Volanges, in a fit of maternal fondness, was on the point of giving away her daughter to Danceny ; from thence proceeded the remarkable tenderness you observed the *next morning*. This would have been still one of your master strokes. Fortunately the tender parent consulted me about it ; and I expect my answer will give her a disrelish to it. I said so much in praise of virtue, and wheedled her so well, that I am sure she will be pleased with my reasons.

I am sorry I had not time to take a copy of my letter, for your edification, on the austerity of my morals. You would there see how contemptible I hold those women of depraved

principles who have lovers. Nothing so commodious, as to be a rigourist in conversation ; it only hurts others, and gives us no uneasiness. Moreover, I am informed the good lady has had her little foibles, as well as others, in her younger days. I was not sorry to humble her conscience, at least, which was some consolation for the praises I was obliged to give her against my own. It was thus, in the same letter, the idea of hurting Ger-court inspired me the resolution to speak well of him.

Adieu, Viscount ! I approve much of your plan of remaining where you are for some time. I have no means for expediting your march : but I recommend you should employ your time with our pupil. As to myself, notwithstanding your polite summons, you find you must still wait, and you will agree with me it is not my fault.

Paris, Oct. 4, 17—.

G 3

L E T.

L E T T E R CVII.

AZOLAN to the Viscount de VALMONT.

S I R,

ON receipt of your orders, I immediately waited on Mr. Bertrand, your honour's steward, who paid me twenty-five louis d'ors, as your honour had ordered. I asked him for two more for Philip, who was to set off immediately, as your honour had ordered, and who had no money; but your steward would not give them, as he said he had not any order from your honour to that purpose; so I was obliged to give them to him myself, and which your honour will be pleased to observe.

Philip set out last night. I recommended it to him strongly not to leave
the

the inn, that you may find him when necessary.

I went immediately after to Madame the Presidente's, to see Mademoiselle Julie: but she was abroad, and I could only speak to La Fleure, from whom I could not get any intelligence, because he has been always abroad since his return only at meal times. It is the second that has always attended table, and your honour knows I had no acquaintance with him: but I began to-day.

I returned this morning to Mademoiselle Julie, and she seemed very glad to see me. I asked her concerning the reason of her mistress returning to town; she told me, she knew nothing of it, and I believe she spoke truth. I scolded her, because she did not tell me of their going away, and she declared she knew nothing of it till her mistress was going to bed; so she was obliged to sit up to settle every

G 4 thing,

thing, and the poor girl had but two hours rest. She did not leave her mistress till past one, and she left her writing.

In the morning Madame de Tourvel left a letter with the housekeeper. Mademoiselle Julie does not know for who: but imagined it was for your honour, but your honour said nothing of it to me. During the whole journey Madame had a great cloak over her, which hid her entirely; but Mademoiselle Julie thinks she cried very often. She did not speak a word during the whole journey, and she would not stop at —, * as she did in coming; which was not very agreeable to Mademoiselle Julie, who had not breakfasted: but, as I said, masters will be masters.

When they came to town, Madame went to bed for two hours. When

* The same village, half way on the road.

she got up, she sent for the porter, and gave him orders not to admit any one. She did not make any toilette. She sat down to dinner, but only tasted a little soup, and went away directly. Her coffee was brought to her apartment. Mademoiselle Julie went in at the same time. She found her mistress settling some papers in her desk, and she could perceive they were letters. I would lay a wager they were your honour's ; and of the three she received the same evening, there was one she had before her late the same night. I am very certain it was one from your honour : but why should she come away that way, that astonishes me ; but certainly your honour knows, and it is no business of mine.

Madame the Presidente went to the library in the evening, and took two books, which she carried into her dressing room : but Mademoiselle Julie declares she did not read a quarter

of an hour the whole day, and that she did nothing but read the letter, muse, and lean on her arm. As I thought your honour would be glad to know what books they were, and that Mademoiselle Julie did not know, I made an excuse to go and see the library to day : there is no void but for two books ; one is the second volume of Christian Thoughts, and the other the first book of a work entitled Clarissa. I write as it was before me ; your honour will certainly know what it is.

Last night Madame had no supper, only took tea. This morning she rung early, and ordered her carriage immediately, and went before nine to mass at the Fenillant's. She wanted to go to confession, but her confessor was not in the way, and will not return for eight or ten days. I thought it necessary to inform your honour of this. She then came home, breakfasted, and

sat down to write, and stayed at it till near one o'clock. I then found an opportunity of doing what your honour wished most for, for I carried the letters to the post office. There was none for Madame de Volanges; but I send your honour one for Monsieur the President; I thought that might be the most necessary. There was one also for Madame de Rosemonde; but I thought your honour might see that whenever you had a mind, and I let it go. Besides, your honour will know all, as Madame the Presidente has wrote to him. Hereafter I can have all your honour pleases; for it is Mademoiselle Julie that almost always gives them to the servants, and she has promised me, that out of friendship to me as well as for your honour, she will do every thing I would have her. She would not even take the money I offered her; but I dare say your honour will make her

some small present; and if it is your pleasure, and that you think proper, I shall soon know what will please her.

I hope your honour will not think me negligent in your service. I have it much at heart to be clear of the reproaches made me. It was my zeal for your honour's service was the reason of my not knowing Madame the Presidente's departure, because your honour ordered me to set out at three in the morning, which hindered me from seeing Mademoiselle Julie at night as usual, as I went to sleep with the ostler, that I might not disturb the people in the castle.

As to what your honour says, I am often in want of money, it is because I always love to be decent, as your honour may see; besides, one must keep up the honour of the livery they wear. I know very well I ought to save something for a rainy day; but I depend
entirely

entirely on your honour's generosity, who has been so good a master.

As to what your honour desires, of my entering into Madame de Tourvel's service, and still remaining in your's, I hope your honour will not require it; it was quite different at the Duchess's; for I certainly cannot stoop to wear a livery, and a lawyer's livery, after having been your honour's huntsman. As for all the rest, your honour may dispose as you please of him, who is, with the greatest respect and affection, his most humble and obedient servant,

ROUX AZOLAN, *huntsman*.

Paris, Oct. 5, at night.

L E T.

L E T T E R C V I I I .

*The Présidente de TOURVEL to Madame
de ROSEMONDE.*

MY dear indulgent mother, what obligations do I not lay under to you! what comfort have I not received from your letter! I have read it over and over; I cannot lay it down; to it I owe the few moments of ease I have had since my departure. — Your bounty, your virtue, your prudence can, then, compassionate my weakness. You pity my misfortunes. Ah! could you but be sensible of them — they are frightful. I imagined I had experienced the pangs of love; but the most excruciating, which must be felt to have any idea of it, is to be separated from the beloved object, for
ever

ever separated! — The anguish that sinks me to-day will again return to-morrow, the next day, all my life! Great God! I am yet but young, what a length of sufferings!

To be the cause of one's own misery; to tear one's heart with their own hands; and during those insupportable torments, to know one can put a period to them with a word, and that word to be criminal! — Alas, my dear friend! —

When I took the painful resolution to banish myself from him, I was flattered with the hope that absence would increase my strength and resolution. How fatally am I deceived! They seem to have totally abandoned me. I had more to struggle with, it's true: but in my resistance I was not deprived of all resource; I could sometimes see him; often even not daring to look on him, I was sensible his eyes were fixed on me,

me, they seemed to cheer my heart. But now in my dismal solitude, separated from all my heart held dear, lonely with my misfortunes, every moment of my painful existence is marked with tears, nothing to soften their bitterness, no consolation to mingle with my sacrifices ; and those I have already made, render those I still must make more sorrowful.

Even yesterday, how forcibly did I experience this ! Among the letters brought me, there was one from him, which I distinguished from among the rest before they were delivered. I trembled — I rose involuntarily — scarce could conceal my emotion ; and yet that state was not unpleasing. Soon after left alone, this deceitful pleasure fled, and left one more sacrifice to be made : for how could I open this letter, which I was impatient to read ? Strange fatality ! that the few consolations which
offer

offer are so many new privations to me ; which are still made more intolerable by the idea that M. de Valmont shares them.

It is out at last ; that name that incessantly possesses me, that I had so much pain to write : the kind of reproach you gave me, has been truly alarming — I beseech you will be persuaded, no false shame has altered my confidence in you ; — then why should I be afraid to name him ? Ah ! I am ashamed of my sentiments, but not of him who causes them. Where is there another so worthy to inspire them ? Yet I can't account why that name does not naturally flow from my pen ; and even now, I could not write it without some pause : but to return to him. You write me, he appeared *amazingly affected at my departure*. What did he say then ? What did he do ? Did he talk of returning to Paris ? I beg you will put him

him off it, if you possibly can. If he does me justice, he ought not to be angry with me for this step: but he must be sensible it is an irreverfible refolution. One of my greateft tortures is to be ignorant of his thoughts. I ftill have his letter there — but you will certainly agree with me, I ought not to open it.

It is only through you, my moft indulgent friend, I fhall not be entirely feparated from him. I will not abufe your goodnefs. I know well you muft not write long letters; but you will not refufe a few words to your child, to affift her refolution, and comfort her. Adieu, my moft refpectable friend!

Paris, Oct. 5, 17—.

L E T-

L E T T E R CIX.

CECILIA VOLANGES *to the Marchioness de MERTEUIL.*

DEAR Madam, I did not deliver the letter you did me the honour to write me until this day to M. de Valmont. I kept it four days, often under great apprehensions lest it should be discovered, but concealed it carefully; and when a fit of dulness seized me, I locked myself up to read it again. I begin to think what I imagined so great a misfortune, is a trifling thing; I own there is a deal of pleasure in it; so that I begin to be tolerably easy. Nothing now gives me any trouble, but the idea of Danceny; I am often, that I do not think of him at all, and I believe it is because

M. de

M. de Valmont is so engaging. I made it up with him two days ago ; which was not at all difficult ; for before I had scarcely spoke, he said, if I had any thing to tell him, he would come to my room at night if it was agreeable to me. As soon as he came, he was as good humoured as if I had not done any thing to vex him. He did not scold me till afterwards, and then very gently, but in such a manner — just as you used to do ; which convinces me, he loves me very much.

I cannot remember all the comical stories he told me, which I should never have believed, particularly about mama. I would be much obliged to you, if you would let me know if it is all true. I could not refrain from laughing ; once I was ready to burst out, which frightened us both ; for mama would have heard me, and then what would become of me ! she would have

have infallibly shut me up in the convent.

I must be prudent ; and, as M. de Valmont says he would not run the risk of a discovery for all the world, we have agreed, hereafter he will only come, open the door, and we will go to his chamber. There will be no danger then ; I was there last night : whilst I am writing to you, I expect him. Now, Madam, I hope you will not be angry with me. There is still something in your letter that surprises me a good deal ; that is, in regard to Danceny and M. de Valmont when I am married. I think you told me at the opera, when once I was married, I should love no one but my husband, and I must even forget Danceny : may be I did not understand you right ; and I would much rather it was otherwise, because I should not then be so much afraid of being married. I shall even wish
for

for it, as I shall have the more liberty. I hope then matters may be settled, that I shall have Danceny only to think of. I know very well I shall never be truly happy but with him; for the thoughts of him constantly disturb me; I have no peace but when I do not think of him, and that is not in my power; as soon as he comes in my head, I grow melancholy.

My greatest consolation is, you promise me Danceny will love me the more for it: are you very sure of it? You would not deceive me, I know; however, it is very whimsical that it should be Danceny I love, and that M. de Valmont — but, as you say, may be it is all for the better. I do not well understand what you mention about my writing. Danceny likes my letters very well: I must not say any thing to him, I know, about what passes

passes

passes between M. de Valmont and me — you need not be uneasy about that.

Mama has not spoke yet about marriage; but when she does, since it is to ensnare me, I promise you I will know how to tell a lie.

Adieu, my dear friend; I am very much obliged to you; I assure you I shall never forget your friendship: I must conclude, for it is almost one, and M. de Valmont will be here soon.

Oct. 10, 17—

L E T.

L E T T E R CX.

*Viscount de VALMONT to the Marchio-
ness de MERTEUIL.*

THE heavenly powers! I had a soul formed for sorrow; grant me one for bliss.* I think it is the tender Saint Preux, who thus expresses himself: more equally divided than he, I at once am possessed of both. I am, my dear friend, at once very happy and very miserable; since you are entirely in my confidence, I will relate my pains and pleasures.

My ungrateful devotee still perseveres in her inflexibility; she has returned me four letters unopened—not four neither, for guessing that after

* New Heloise.

the first, it would be followed by another, I resolved not to lose my time thus, to make my mournful complaints as common-place without a date, and since the second post, it is always the same letter goes and comes, I only change the cover. If my fair one ends as fair ones generally do, and will relent, at least through fatigue; she will at length keep it: then will be the time to renew the correspondence; you may guess this new method hurts my intelligence.— I have, however discovered the fickle woman has changed her confidant; I am certain at least since her leaving the castle, she has not wrote to M. de Volanges; but has twice wrote to old Rosemonde. As she has not said any thing of it to us, and does not even mention her *dear fair one*, who she was incessantly talking of, I concluded she is appointed successor: I conjecture the

necessity of talking of me on the one hand, and the shame of again assuming with Madame de Volanges, a subject so long disavowed, have produced this grand revolution: I am apprehensive I shall lose by the change; for the older women grow, the more morose and severe they are: the first would have said every thing evil of me, but the other will say more of the evils of love; and the sensible prude is more afraid of the passion than the Person. The only method to be informed is, as you will observe, to put a stop to the clandestine trade; I have already given my huntsman ample directions, and am hourly in expectation; until then, chance rules all. For these last eight days I have run over all manner of known methods, as also those of romances and secret memoirs, and cannot find a precedent neither for the circumstances of the adventure, or character of the heroine.

The

The difficulty does not lie in getting into her house, even at night, or even to set her asleep as in *Clarissa*, but after two months of care and trouble, to be obliged to recur to such strange methods; follow the track others have left, and triumph without glory!--No, she shall not have *the pleasure of vice and the honour of virtue*.* It is not enough to possess her, she shall give herself up: to compass this, I must not only get in to her house, with her consent; find her alone, and inclined to listen to me; above all, blind her on her danger, for if she perceives it, she will overcome it or perish. The more convinced I am what is necessary to be done, the greater I find the difficulties in the execution; were you again to ridicule me, I will confess my embarrassment increases the more I think of it.

* New Heloise.

I really believe I should have gone mad, were it not for the pleasing distraction our pupil gives me; my recreations with her are an antidote to melancholy.

Would you believe it was three whole days before your letter had any effect on the little terrified creature? Thus one false idea is capable of destroying the best disposition.

At length on Saturday she came about, began to mutter a few words, in such a low tone, and so inarticulate, with shame no doubt, it was almost impossible to understand her: her blushes, however, declared the business; until then, I assumed a consequential air, but soon softened by so pleasing a repentance, I condescended to promise the pretty penitent, to go to her at night; this favour was accepted with all the gratitude due to so great a kindness.

As

As I never lose sight of your schemes or my own, I resolved not to neglect this opportunity of coming at the intrinsic value of this child, also to accelerate her education. To be more at liberty to prosecute this business, it was necessary to change the place of rendezvous, for as there is only a closet which separates her room from that of her mother's, she could not think herself sufficiently safe to indulge at her ease: I was determined then to contrive *innocently*, some noise which should frighten her, and make her resolve in future to accept a place of more safety, but she saved me the trouble.

The little thing laughs much, and to keep up her spirits, I took it in my head between the acts, to tell her some scandalous adventures that occurred to me ; to give them a greater relish, and fix her attention the more, I put them all to her mother's account,

H 3 who.

who I loaded with vice and folly. My design in this, was to encourage my timid scholar, and inspire her with a most despicable opinion of her mother. I have always observed, that if this method was not always necessary for the seduction of a young girl, it is indispensable, even the most efficacious, to vitiate her; for she who has no respect for her mother, will never have any for herself: this moral truth, which I think so useful, I am glad to illustrate by an example to corroborate the precept. But your pupil, who did not dream of the moral, was every moment ready to burst with laughing, and once had like to have broke out. I had no difficulty to persuade, her she made a great noise; I seemed much alarmed, so did she: that it might make the impression more forcible, I did not suffer pleasure to make its appearance again, but left her three hours sooner than usual,

usual, after having agreed to meet the next night in my chamber. I have already received her twice: in this short interval, the scholar is almost as learned as the master: yes, upon my word I have taught her every thing as far as the compliances: I have concealed nothing but the precautions.

Being thus engaged all night, I sleep the greatest part of the day; and as, in the present state of the castle, I have nothing to attract me, I scarcely appear an hour in the day in the saloon. To-day I have taken the resolution to eat in my room—shall only leave it now and then for a short walk: those oddities will be imputed to my health; I have declared I was *devoured with spleen*; I have also talked of a little fever; it will be sufficient to speak in a weak and languid voice to make that go down; and for an alteration in my countenance, rely on your pupil, *love will provide*

*for it.** My leisure hours are taken up with the means of regaining the advantages I have lost over my ingrate, in composing a catechism of debauchery for the use of my scholar, wherein I call every thing by its technical name; I anticipate my joy on the very affecting conversation it will furnish between Gercourt and she the first night after their marriage. Nothing can be more diverting than the ingenuousness with which she expresses what little she knows of this language; she does not think people ought to speak otherwise; this is really enchanting; this contrast of simple candour, with the stile of barefaced impudence, has its effect; and I do not know how it is, but of late nothing pleases me but oddities.

I give too much way perhaps to this, as I commit my time and health; but I hope my feigned sick-

* Regnard's Amorous Follies.

ness may, besides saving me the disagreeable tediousness of the saloon, be of service with my austere devotee, whose ferocious virtue is still allied to tender sensibility ! I make no doubt she is by this time informed of this great event, and I have a strong desire to know how she takes it, as I would venture to lay a wager she will take the honour of it to herself ; I shall regulate the state of my health according to the impression it makes on her. Now, my charming friend, you have my whole story : I wish to have more interesting news for you ; and I hope you will be persuaded, that I reckon on the reward I expect from you as a great share in the pleasure I promise myself.

OS. II, 17.—

H 5

LET-

L E T T E R C X I.

*Count GERCOURT to Madame de
VOLANGES.*

EVERY thing in this country, Madam, has the most pacific appearance, and we daily expect orders to return to France. I hope you have not the least doubt of my eagerness for this return, to compleat my union with Mademoiselle de Volanges and you. Yet the Duke of ———, my cousin, to whom you know I am under so many obligations, has just informed me of his recal from Naples. He writes me, his intention to come by Rome, and take in his way that part of Italy he has not seen. He requests I should accompany him on this journey, which will be of six weeks or two months. I will not conceal from you, it would be very agreeable to me to embrace
this

this opportunity. For when once married, I shall not readily undertake any journeys but those the service will require; perhaps, it would be also more convenient to postpone the ceremony until winter, as all my relations will not be in Paris until then, particularly the Marquis de —, to whom I am indebted for the hope of being allied to you. Notwithstanding those considerations, my resolutions on this matter shall be entirely governed by yours; and if you are not perfectly satisfied with this proposal, I instantly renounce mine. I only request you will do me the favour to inform me of your intentions. I shall wait your answer here, which will regulate my conduct.

I am, with great respect, and every sentiment due from a son,

your most humble servant,

Count de GERCOURT.

Bastia, Oct. 10, 17—.

L E T T E R CXII.

*Madame de ROSEMOND to the Presi-
dente de TOURVEL.*

(Dictated only.)

THIS instant, my lovely dear, I received your letter of the 11th,* and the mild reproaches it contains. You must confess you intended to make many more; if you had not recollected my title of mother, you would have given me a flogging. That would have been very unjust. It was my hope and wish, to have been able to answer you myself, which made me defer it daily; yet, after all, you see I am obliged to employ my waiting woman's hand, to do me that office.

* This letter was never found.

The abominable rheumatism has again seized me ; it has this time taken its residence in my right arm, so I am absolutely deprived of its use. This is the consequence of such a young blooming creature's having old friends ; they suffer from our disorders.

As soon as my pains will give me any relief, assure yourself I will have a long chat with you. In the meantime I must acquaint you, I received both your letters. If it was possible, they would have redoubled my friendship for you ; and that I shall never cease taking a lively share in every thing that concerns you.

My nephew is also a little indisposed ; but it is not of any consequence, and need not give any uneasiness. It is a slight indisposition, which seems to affect his temper more than his health. We scarcely ever see him now.

His

His retreat, and your departure, will not much enliven our little circle. The little Volanges has an immense deal of chat, and yawns all day, as if she would swallow you; for these few days especially, she does us the honour to fall into a profound sleep every evening.

Adieu, my lovely dear! I am ever your sincere friend, your mama, your sister even, if my great age would allow me the title. I am, in few words, most tenderly attached to you.

Signed, ADELAÏDE, *for*
Madame de ROSEMONDE.

From the castle of ———,

Oct. 14, 17—.

L E T.

L E T T E R CXIII.

*Marchioness de MERTEUIL to the Vis-
count de VALMONT.*

I THINK it time to inform you, Viscount, the world begin to talk of you. Your absence from Paris is remarked, and the cause guessed. I was yesterday at a public supper, which was very numerous ; where it was positively asserted, you was detained in a village by an unfortunate romantic amour. Joy was instantly visible on the countenance of all those envious of your successes, and of all the women you have neglected. Believe me, you should not suffer such dangerous reports to gain ground, and should immediately return to destroy them by your presence.

Re-

Remember, if you once lose the reputation of irresistible, you will soon more readily find resistance; your rivals will lose the respect they had for you, and will dare you; for is there one amongst them who does not think himself more powerful than virtue? But, above all, remember, among the number of women you have held up to public view, all those you have not had, will attempt to undeceive the public, whilst the others will use every means to abuse it. To sum up all, you must expect to be rated, perhaps, as much beneath your value, as you have hitherto been above it.

Return then, Viscount, and no longer sacrifice your reputation to a puerile whim. You have done all we wanted with the little Volanges; and as for your Presidente, it is not very probable you will do your business with her at ten leagues distance. Do you imagine she will go after you?
Per-

Perhaps she no longer thinks of you, or thinks of you only to felicitate herself for having humbled you. But here you would find some opportunity of appearing with eclat, and you really want it. If even you should continue obstinate in your ridiculous adventure, I can't see how your return would hurt you — on the contrary.

For if your Presidente *adores* you, as you have so often told me, but never yet proved, her only consolation, her sole pleasure, ought now to be to speak of you, to know what you do, what you say, what you think, even the most trifling matter about you. Those wretched fooleries are of some consequence, according to the privations that are experienced. They are the crumbs falling from the table of the rich man, which he despises; but which the poor one collects with avidity, and feeds on. So the poor Presidente at present receives those crumbs;

crumbs ; and the more she has of them, she will be less greedy for the rest. Moreover, as you know her confidant, there is no doubt but every letter contains a little exhortation to corroborate her prudence, and strengthen her virtue. Why will you then leave resources to the one for her defence, and power to the other to hurt you.

Not that I am in the least of your opinion on the loss you think you sustain by the change of confidant ; for M. de Volanges detests you, and hatred is always more ingenious and clear sighted than friendship. Your old aunt's virtue will never permit her to slander her dear nephew, for virtue has its foibles. Again, your fears lead you into an error. It is not true, that *the older women grow, the more morose and severe they are*. It is from forty to fifty that grief for faded beauties rage, to be forced to abandon

don pretensions and pleasures to which the mind is still attached, make almost all women peevish and ridiculous. It is necessary they should have this long interval to prepare for this great sacrifice : but when it is once compleated, they divide into two classes.

The most numerous, which are those who never possessed any thing but youth and beauty, fall into a weak apathy, from which they never recover but for play and a few practical devotions ; that class is always tiresome, often morose, sometimes marplots, but rarely mischievous. It is not easy to determine whether those women are or are not *severé* ; without ideas, or in a manner without existence, they repeat indifferently, and without comprehending, every thing they hear ; and are, as to themselves, *non entities*.

The

The other class, much more uncommon, but truly valuable, are those of good disposition, who having cultivated their minds, can create themselves an existence, when nature fails; and can, when the embellishments of the outward figure are useless, place them to their minds. Those women have most commonly a sound judgment, and a mind replete with solidity, good humour, and kindness. — They replace the seducing charms with attractive goodness and cheerfulness, whose charms increase with their years. Thus they may be said in some shape to renew their age, by gaining the affections of the youthful part of society. But far from being what you call *morose and severe*; the habits of indulgence, the long reflections on human nature, but especially the remembrance of youth, by which alone they have a relish for life, would rather make them too condescending.

I can

I can aver, having always cultivated an intimacy with old women, of whose good opinion I saw early the advantage, I have known several who I frequented as much from inclination as interest. I shall stop here ; for I dread you should fall in love with your old aunt, you are so apt to be inflamed suddenly and morally, and bury yourself with her in the tomb you have so long dwelt in.

But to return. Although you seem enraptured with your little scholar, I fancy she has no share in your projects. You found her ready to your hand, and took her : be it so. But that cannot be called taste. It is not even, properly speaking, an enjoyment ; you possess her person only. Not to mention her heart, which I suppose does not give you the least uneasiness, you don't even engage her imagination. I cannot tell whether you have observed it, but I have a
proof

proof of it in the last letter she wrote me: I send it you, that you may be convinced. Observe, always when she mentions you, it is *M. de Valmont*; all her ideas, even those you raise, terminate in Danceny; she does not call him Monsieur, but plain Danceny. Thus she distinguishes him from all others: and even giving herself up to you, she familiarises herself only with him. If such a conquest has any thing *bewitching*, if the pleasures you receive are so *attacking*, you are certainly modest, and not difficult to please. Keep her; I agree to it; it is even a part of my scheme: but I really think it should not discompose you in the least. You should also have some ascendant over her, and not suffer her to draw near Danceny, until he is a little worn out of her memory.

Before I think of your coming to me, I must tell you this pretended sickness is an exploded common trick.

On

On my word, Viscount, you lack invention ! I am also guilty of repetitions sometimes, as you shall hear : but I endeavour to amuse by the circumstances ; and success justifies me. I am going to attempt another adventure. I will agree, it has not the merit of difficulty ; but it will be a distraction at least, for time lies very heavy on my hands.

I cannot account for the reason, but since Prevan's affair, Belleruche is become insupportable to me. He has redoubled his attention, tenderness, and *veneration*, to so violent a degree, I can hold out no longer. His wrath at the time was pleasant enough ; but it was necessary to check it, otherwise I must have committed myself ; there was no making him listen to reason, I resolved to shew him more affection, to bring him round more easily ; he has taken it so seriously, that ever since he puts me out of all patience
with

with his eternal charms. I moreover take notice of his insulting confidence, for he really looks on me as his property. I am really humbled. He holds me cheap, indeed, if he thinks himself capable of fixing me. He had the assurance to tell me lately, I never should have loved any other but him. Then, indeed, I lost all patience, and was obliged to call my prudence in aid, not to undeceive him instantly, by telling how matters stood. He is certainly a pretty fellow, to aspire to an exclusive right ! I will allow, he is well made, and a tolerable person : but take him all in all, he is only a manœuverer in love. The time is come, we must part.

I have endeavoured at it this fortnight past. I have, by turns, treated him with coolness, capriciousness, bad humour, quarrelled even ; all in vain : the tenacious creature will not quit his hold. I must, then, use some

violence ; for this purpose I take him with me to the country. We set out the day after to-morrow. We shall only have some people of no consequence, and not very discerning, and shall be almost as much at liberty as if we were alone. There I shall so overload him with love and fondness, we shall so live for each other only, that he will wish to see the end of this journey, which is now his greatest bliss, more than I shall ; and if he does not return more tired of me than I shall be of him, I consent you may say, you know more of the matter than I do.

The pretence for this retreat is, I want seriously to employ my time in preparing for my great law suit, that is to be decided the beginning of winter, which pleases me much ; for it is really very disagreeable to have one's fortune in suspense. Not that I am uneasy about the issue ; for,

first, I have right on my side, as all my lawyers assure me; — if it even was not the case, I should be very unskilful, indeed, if I could not gain a suit against minors of tender years, and their old guardian: however, as nothing must be omitted in a business of such consequence, I shall have two lawyers with me. Will not this be a sprightly jaunt? If I gain my cause, and lose Belleruche, I shall not regret the time.

Now, Viscount, I will give you a hundred guesses before you name his successor; I forget though, you never guess any thing — Why, Danceny. You are astonished; for I am not yet reduced to the education of children. This one, however, deserves an exception in his favour. He has the graces of youth, but not its frivolousness. His reserve in a circle is well adapted to banish all manner of suspicion, and he is the more amiable
I when

when in a tête-a-tête ; not that I yet have had one with him on my own account. I am only his confidant : but under this mask of friendship, I think I see a strong inclination for me, and I already feel a violent one for him. It would be pity so much wit and delicacy should be sacrificed and stupified with that little idiot Volanges. I hope he deceives himself in thinking he loves her ; she is so far from deserving him. Not that I have the least tincture of jealousy : but it would be murder ; and I wish to save Danceny. I therefore beg, Viscount, you will use your endeavours that he may not come near his Cecilia, as he has got the disagreeable custom of calling her. A first liking has always an inconceivable power. If he was now to see her, I could not be certain of any thing, especially during my absence. At my

I 2

return,

return, I shall take every thing on myself, and will answer for the success.

I had some notion of taking the young man with me; but sacrificed my inclination to my usual prudence: moreover, I should have been apprehensive he might make some observations on Belleröche and me; an idea even of such a thing would distract me; as I wish to offer myself immaculate to his imagination: such as one should be to be worthy of him.

Paris, Oct. 15, 17—

L E T T E R CXIV.

*The Presidente de TOURVEL to Madame
de ROSEMONDE.*

MY dear friend, my uneasiness for the state of your health is so great, I cannot forbear writing to you. With-
out

out knowing whether you will be able to answer me, I cannot avoid interrogating you. M. de Valmont's state, which you tell me *is not dangerous*, does not, however, dispel my apprehensions so much as it does your's. It is no novelty that melancholy and a distaste for company should be symptoms of an approaching disease; bodily disorders; as well as those of the mind, incline us to solitude; and we often load those with ill temper, whose disorder we ought to compassionate.

I think he ought, at least, consult with some one. How happens it, that being yourself indisposed, you have not a physician? Mine, who I sent for this morning, and whom, for I will not conceal it from you, I consulted indirectly, is of opinion, that with persons of naturally an active disposition, this kind of sudden apathy should by no means be neglect-

ed. He told me, moreover, disorders will not give way to remedies, when they have been neglected in the beginning. Why then run such a hazard with one so dear to you?

It adds greatly to my uneasiness, I have not had any news of him these four days. Good God! I beg you will not deceive me on his state! Why is it he has left off writing to me so suddenly? If it was only the effect of my obstinacy in returning his letters, I believe he would have taken the resolution sooner. Without having, however, any faith in forebodings, for these few days I have been in a most melancholy situation. I fear I am on the eve of some great misfortune. You cannot imagine, and I am ashamed to tell you, how much I regret not receiving those letters which I refused to read. I was certain he at least thought of me, and saw something that came from his hands. I did not
open

open them, but I wept over them : my tears were softer, and flowed with more ease ; they only partly dissipated the habitual oppression I experience since my return. I conjure you, my most respectable friend, to write to me yourself as soon as you can ; in the mean time, pray indulge me every day in hearing from you, and of him.

I now perceive, I have scarcely said a word to you : but you know my sentiments, my unreserved attachment, my tender gratitude, for your sincere friendship. You will forgive my distress, my painful anguish, for dreading evils of which I am, perhaps, the cause. Merciful God ! this desponding idea pursues me and wrings my heart. This misfortune only was wanting. I know I am born to experience them all.

Adieu, my dear friend ! love me, pity me. Shall I hear from you this day ?

Paris, Oct. 16, 17—.

L E T T E R CXV.

*The Viscount de VALMONT to the
Marchioness de MERTEUIL.*

IT is a most unaccountable thing, my charming friend, when we are at a remote distance, we cannot so readily understand each other. Whilst I was near you, we always had the same sentiments, and viewed every object in the same light; because I am now about three months absent, we are no longer of the same opinion on any thing. Which of us is in the wrong? You certainly will not hesitate in your answer: but I, more wise, or more polite, will not decide. I shall only reply to your letter, and continue to lay my conduct open.

First, accept my thanks for the intelligence of the reports flying about
me ;

me ; that does not make me uneasy : I think soon I shall be furnished with materials to silence them all. Have a little patience ; I shall again appear more celebrated than ever, and more worthy of you.

I expect even they will give me credit for the affair of the little Volanges, which you affect to treat as such a trifle : as if there was no merit in carrying in one night a young girl from a favoured lover ; to make use of her after as much as one chuses, even as their own property, and without any farther trouble ; to obtain from her what one dare not even require from girls whose vocation it is ; and all this without in the least disturbing her tender affection ; without making her inconstant, or even false ; for certainly I don't engage her imagination. So that after my fancy is at an end, I will deliver her into her lover's arms, without, as I may say,

her having taken notice of any thing. Pray is that so common an exploit? Yet believe, when she is gone from under my tuition, the principles I have instilled into her will nevertheless display themselves; and I prophesy, the timid scholar will take a flight that will do honour to her master.

If, however, they like heroicks better, I will shew my Presidente; this model cited for every virtue, respected even by our greatest libertines; insomuch, they had given up the idea of attacking her. I will shew her, forgetting duty and virtue; sacrificing her reputation and two years prudence to run after the happiness of pleasing me; intoxicated with love; sufficiently recompensed for so many sacrifices by a word, a look, which yet she will not always obtain. I will do more, I will even abandon her; and if I know this woman, I shall
not

not have a successor; she will resist the necessity of consolation; the habitude of pleasure; even the thirst for revenge: she shall have existed for me only; and let her career be long or short, I alone will have opened and shut the barrier; when once I rise to this triumph, I will tell my rivals, "that is my exploit, search the world for such an example."

You ask me whence proceeds this excessive confidence? Why, for eight days past, I am my fair one's confidant; she does not tell me her secrets, but I come at them; two of her letters have given me sufficient information; the rest I will only read out of curiosity. I now absolutely want nothing to crown my success but admittance, my measures are taken; I shall immediately execute them. I think you are curious; but to punish you for not believing my intentions, you shall not know them; you really in-

earnest deserve I should withdraw my confidence from you, at least, for this adventure ; were it not for the tender reward you have attached to its success, I would not mention it again. You see I am vexed ; however, in hopes of your amendment, I will be satisfied with this slight reprimand, and my indulgent mind for a moment, forgetting my grand project, shall employ itself on yours.

You are then in the country, dull as sentiment, and sorrowful as fidelity ; and poor Belleruche, not satisfied with making him drink the waters of oblivion, you will also put him to the torture ; how does he like it ? Does he bear the nausea of love well ? I would rather than a great deal he should become more attached to you ; I am curious to learn what more efficacious remedy you would use ; I really pity you, to have been obliged to have recourse to that. Never did I make love but once methodically ;

I certainly had a strong motive, as it was with the Countess de ———; and twenty times in her arms have I been tempted to tell her, “Madam, I renounce the place I solicit, and permit me to quit that I occupy.” Of all the women I have had, she is the only one of whom I take pleasure in speaking ill. Your motive, I must own, is truly ridiculous, and you was right in thinking I should not guess the successor:—What, then, is it for Danceny you have taken all this trouble? Ah, my dear friend, let him alone to adore *his virtuous Cecilia*, and do not commit yourself in this children’s play; leave the scholars to be formed by good old women, or play with the pensioners at pretty innocent games. What, would you instruct a novice who neither knows how to take or leave you, for whom you must do every thing? I tell you seriously, I disapprove your choice; and let it be
ever

ever so secret, it will humble you in my mind, and your own conscience. You say you have taken a great liking to him; for shame! you certainly deceive yourself. I think I have discovered the cause of your error; this fine disgust for Belleruche happened at a time of scarcity, and Paris not offering any choice, your lively ideas fixed on the first object they met; but remember, at your return you may choose among a thousand; and if you dread the inaction you risk falling into in deferring your choice, I offer myself for your amusement at your leisure hours. From this time until your arrival, my great affairs will be determined one way or other; certainly neither the little Volanges, nor the Presidente even, will employ me so much, but I may devote myself to you as much as you wish; perhaps even before that time, I may have delivered the little one into the hands of
her

C O N N E C T I O N S. 103

her discreet lover. Say what you please, which I don't agree to, that it is not an *attaching* enjoyment, as I intended she should ever retain an idea of me superior to all the rest of mankind; I assumed such a tone with her as I could not support long without prejudice to my health; and from this moment I am no longer hers only for family duty. You don't understand me; I mean I wait a second period to confirm my hopes, and give me full assurance I have amply succeeded in my scheme. Yes, my dear friend, I have already a first indication that my scholar's husband will not die without posterity, and the chief of the house of Gercourt will be a younger brother of that of Valmont. But let me finish to my own liking this business which I undertook at your request: remember if you make Danceny inconstant, you deprive the adventure of its poignancy. Consider also,

also; in offering myself to you, I have a right to a preference.

I depend so much upon it, I was not afraid to counteract your designs in even assisting to increase the tender passion of the discreet lover, for the first and worthy object of his choice. Having yesterday found your pupil writing to him, and disturbed her in this pleasing task, for another still more pleasing: I afterwards desired to see the letter; as it was too cold and constrained, I made her sensible it was not thus she should console her lover, and made her write another which I dictated; where, imitating her nonsense as well as I could, I endeavoured to feed the young man's passion by more certain hopes; the little creature was overjoyed, she said, to find she wrote so well, and hereafter I should hold the correspondence. What have I not done for this Danceny! I have been at once his friend,
his

his confidant, his rival, and his mistress; even at this instant, I am endeavouring to save him from your dangerous toils: ay, dangerous; for to possess, and then lose you, is purchasing a moment's happiness with an eternity of regret.

Adieu, my lovely friend! muster up resolution to dispatch Belleruche as soon as possible; think no more of Danceny; and prepare to again find, and return me the delicious pleasures, of our first connection.

Oct. 19, 17:—

P. S. I congratulate you on the approaching decision of your great cause; I should be very happy this event should occur during my reign.

E E T—

L E T T E R CXVI.

Chevalier DANCENY to CECILIA VOLANGES.

MADAME de Merteuil set out this morning for the country; thus am I deprived, my charming Cecilia, of my only remaining consolation in your absence, of conversing of you with our mutual friend: she has given me leave for some time past to distinguish her by that title; I accepted it the more eagerly, as it has something the appearance of drawing me nearer to you; she is a most amiable woman, and knows how to add the most attractive charms to friendship: — It would seem as if this pleasing sensation was embellished and strengthened in her the more, for what she

she refuses to love. You cannot imagine how much she loves you; how pleased she is to hear me speak of you: it is this certainly that attaches me so much to her. What happiness, to exist only for you both! to make such sudden transitions from the ecstasy of love, to the charms of friendship; to devote my life to it; to be in some measure the point of re-union to your reciprocal attachment; to be convinced the happiness of the one is also that of the other.

You cannot, my charming Cecilia, love this adorable woman too much: add to my attachment for her, by sharing it with me. Now I experience the charms of friendship, I wish you also to taste them; I think no enjoyment complete you do not partake of: Yes, my dear Cecilia, I wish to inspire you with all the tender sentiments; that every idea should convey happiness to you; and would still think I returned
you

you only a portion of the felicity I have received from you.

Alas! those enchanting dreams are only the pleasing fancies of imagination, and reality only offers me mortifying privations. I now plainly see I must give up the flattering hope of seeing you in the country: my sole consolation is endeavouring to be persuaded you cannot accomplish it, and you do not chuse to afflict me more by informing me of it; twice already have I lamented this disappointment, and received no reply:—Ah! Cecilia, I really believe you love me with your whole soul, but your heart is not so ardent as mine. If the obstacles were left to me to be removed, or my own interests to be managed instead of yours, I would soon convince you nothing was impossible to love. You do not inform me even when this cruel absence is to be at an end: here surely I can see you; your enchanting looks

looks would revive my sorrowful heart which is almost totally depressed: forgive, my dear Cecilia, my fears, they are not suspicious; I place implicit faith in your love, in your constancy; I should be too miserable, had I any doubts; but so many obstacles still renewed—I am, my dear, very much dejected:—Madame de Merteuil's departure has renewed all my sorrows.

Adieu, my dear Cecilia, adieu!—Remember your lover is in affliction, and you only can make him happy.

Paris, Oct. 17, 17.—

L E T-

L E T T E R CXVII.

CÉCILIA VOLANGES *to the Chevalier*
DANCENY.

(Dictated by Valmont.)

DO you think my dear friend there is any necessity to be angry with me to make me melancholy, when I know you to be in affliction; and do you think I have not my share of sufferings as well as you? I even partake of those I am obliged to give you; and still you are unjust. I see plainly what puts you out of temper; it is because I was silent to the two requisitions you made to me here; do you think an answer to it is so easy to give? Do you think I do not know what you want is not right? And if I am so distressed

distressed to refuse you at such a distance, how would it be if you was here? Then again I must be afflicted all my life for giving you a moments consolation.

I hide nothing from you, I give you my reasons, you may judge for yourself; I should perhaps have done what you wish, had it not been for what I wrote you, that M. de Gercourt, who is the cause of all our trouble, will not come so soon; and as mama is greatly pleased with me now, I caress her as much as possible; who knows what I may bring her to; if we could be happy without having any thing to reproach myself with, surely it would be much better. If I am to believe what I have often heard, that men, when they have loved their wives before marriage, do not love them so much after; the dread of that restrains me more than any thing:—Are you
not

not sure of my heart, and will there not be always time enough.

I promise you, if I cannot avoid marrying M. de Gercourt, who I already hate without knowing him, nothing shall prevent me from being yours as much as I can, even before any thing, as I do not mind being loved by any but you: — you will see if I act wrong it shall not be my fault; the rest is indifferent to me, provided you promise to love me always as much as you do now: — but until then let me be as I am; and do not ask a thing I have good reasons not to do, and am vexed to refuse you.

I would likewise be very glad M. de Valmout would not be so pressing on your account, which only makes me more unhappy: he is your very good friend I assure you; he does every thing as you would do yourself; but adieu, my dear friend! it was when I
began

began to write, and spent a good part of the night at it. I am going to bed to retrieve the time I lost. I embrace you ; but do not scold me any more.

Castle of —

Oct. 18, 1744.

L E T T E R CXVIII.

*Chevalier DANCENY to the Marchioness
de MERTEUIL.*

IF I am to credit my almanack, my charming friend, you are absent only two days ; but my heart tells me it is an age. According to your own doctrine then, the heart must always be believed. It is time you should return : surely your affairs should be finished by this time. How can I be any way concerned in the success of your law suit, as I must suffer by your
Vol. III. K absence ?

absence ? I am now much inclined to scold ; and it is really hard, being so ripe for bad humour, I dare not give way to it.

Is it not a species of infidelity, to leave your friend, after having accustomed him not to be able to exist out of your presence ? Your lawyers will even find it difficult to defend so bad a cause : besides, those gentlemen generally make use of arguments which are not valid answers to sentiments.

You have given me so many for this journey, that I am sick of them, and will pay no farther attention to them, were they even to persuade me to forget you. Yet that would not be so unreasonable, nor so difficult, as you may imagine : it would be only laying aside the habit of always thinking of you ; for nothing here, I can assure you, would ever recall you to my memory.

Our

Our prettiest women, those even called the most amiable, are so inferior to you, that they could give but a very faint idea indeed. I even think, that, with all their practised looks, the more one might at first think that they resembled you, the more striking the difference would afterwards appear. In vain do they use their utmost exertions; they always fail being you; and that precisely constitutes the charm. Unfortunately, when the days are so long, and one is unoccupied, reveries, ideal projects, and chimeras, fill the brain; the mind acquires a degree of elevation. We are intent on ornamenting our productions; we collect together every thing that can please; we arrive at length at perfection; and when we are there, the portrait brings us back to the original, and one is quite astonished to see that you were the only object of all these turns of

the mind. Even at this moment I am the dupe of pretty much the same sort of error. You fancy, perhaps, that it was in order to employ myself on your subject, that I resolved to write to you—not at all: it was in order to direct my attention a little from you. I have a hundred things to tell you, of which you were not the object, and which, nevertheless, you very well know concern me nearly; and yet it is from these things my attention is led away. Since when, then, do the charms of Friendship dissipate those of Love? If I considered it narrowly, perhaps I should have to reproach myself—but hush! Let us forget that small fault, lest we relapse into it; and let even my best female friend be in ignorance of it.

Why are you absent? Why not here to give me an answer? To recall me if I should stray? To talk to me
of

of my Cecilia? To add, if possible, to the happiness I experience in loving her, by the additionally charming idea that it is your friend I love. Yes, I avow the love she inspires me, is become more precious. Since you have been kind enough to become the confidant of it, I feel so great a pleasure in opening my heart to you, in interesting yours in my sentiments, in depositing them there without reserve! I think them the more dear to me in proportion as you condescend to hear them; that I look at you, and say to myself, It is in her that all my happiness is centered. I have nothing new to inform you of as to my situation. The last letter I received from her increases, and gives a degree of security to my hopes; though she still brings a delay to them, yet her motives are so tender and honourable, that I can neither blame her, nor complain of

it. Perhaps this is obscure to you ; but why are you not here ? Though we can say every thing to a friend, every thing cannot be written. The secrets of love especially, are so delicate, that one ought not to let them go in that way, relying on honour. If they are sometimes permitted to go abroad, they never should be permitted to go out of sight ; they ought even to be watched back to their new asylum. Return, then, my adorable friend ; you see your return is necessary : forget, then, the *thousand reasons* that detain you where you are, or teach me to live where you are not.

I have the honour to be, &c.

Paris, Oct. 16, 17—.

LET-

L E T T E R CXIX.

*Madame de ROSEMONDE to the Presi-
dente de TOURVEL.*

ALTHOUGH, still suffering much pain, my lovely dear, I endeavour to write to you myself, in order to tell you what interests you so much. My nephew still preserves his misanthropy: he sends every day regularly to enquire about my health; but has never come once in person, although I requested it; so that we see no more of him than if he was at Paris. This morning, however, I met him, when least expected: it was in my chapel, where I came down for the first time since my painful disorder. They inform me, for four days past he goes there

regularly every morning to mass. God grant it may last.

When I entered, he congratulated me very affectionately on my recovery. As mass was beginning, we broke off the conversation, expecting to renew it afterwards: he disappeared before I could join him again. I will not conceal from you, he is something altered; but, my lovely dear, do not make me repent my confidence in your good sense, by your too great uneasiness; and be assured I would rather afflict than deceive you.

If my nephew continues to treat me so severely, I am resolved, when I am something better, to visit him in his chamber, and endeavour to dive into the cause of this extraordinary madness, in which you certainly have some share. The result of my observations you shall be informed. I must leave off, not being able to stir
my

my fingers. If Adelaide knew I had been writing, she would be very much vexed. Adieu, my lovely dear !

Castle of ———,

Oct. 20, 17—.

L E T T E R CXX.

Viscount de VALMONT to Father
ANSELMUS,

(Of the Feuillant Convent, St. Honoré
Street.)

NOT having the honour of being known to you, Sir, but thoroughly acquainted with the well-placed confidence Madame the Presidente de Tourvel reposes in you, I think I may address myself to you without being guilty of indiscretion, to obtain an essential piece of service, truly worthy your holy ministry, wherein Ma-

dame de Tourvel's advantage is equally concerned with mine.

Having in my possession some papers of consequence that concern her nearly, and should not be entrusted to any person, which I neither ought or will deliver but into her own hands. Being deprived of the means of informing her of this resolution, for reasons which you may probably have learned from her, but which I do not think myself at liberty to acquaint you with, she determined to refuse corresponding with me ; a determination which I do not now in the least blame, as she could not foresee events, so unexpected, and which required the supernatural power, that one is forced to acknowledge for their completion. Therefore I request, Sir, you will be so good to inform her of my new resolves, and ask, in my name, a particular interview, where I may in some measure repair the injuries I have

have been guilty of by my apologies ; and, as the last sacrifice, annihilate, in her presence, the only remaining impressions of an error or crime, which made me culpable towards her.

It cannot be until after this preliminary expiation, I shall dare, at your knees, make the humiliating avowal of my long bad conduct, and implore your mediation, for a still more important, and, unhappily, a much more difficult reconciliation. May I hope, Sir, you will not refuse me your assistance in a business so necessary and so important ; and that you will vouchsafe to aid my weakness, and guide my steps in this new path, which I ardently wish to follow, and to which, with shame, I own myself an utter stranger.

I wait your answer with the impatience of repentance that wishes to reform ; and beg you will believe me

to be, with as much gratitude as veneration,

Your most humble, &c.

P. S. I authorise you, Sir, if you think proper, to communicate this letter entirely to Madame de Tourvel, who I shall make it my duty to respect during the rest of my days, and whom I shall never cease to revere, as the instrument heaven has been pleased to use to bring me back to virtue, by the striking example of her own.

Castle of ———,

Oct. 22, 17.—.

L E T.

L E T T E R CXXI.

*The Marchioness de MERTEUIL to
Chevalier DANCENY.*

I Received your letter, my very young friend, and must scold you before you receive my thanks for it; farther I warn you, if you do not amend, you shall not have any answer from me. Leave, then, that wheedling stile, which is but mere cant, when it is not the expression of love. Is it the stile of friendship? No, my dear friend; each sentiment has its peculiar language suitable to it; and to use another, is to disguise the thought we should express. I am well aware our silly women do not understand what is said to them, unless it is translated in some shape into this fashionable nonsense: but I ima-
I
gined

gined you would have distinguished me from them. I am really hurt, and, perhaps, more than I ought, you should imbibe such an opinion of me.

You will find in my letter what is wanting in yours, frankness and simplicity. As I shall say, it would give me infinite pleasure to see you, and am grieved to have only those about me who stupify me instead of those that give me pleasure; but you translate this same phrase thus: *Teach me to live where you are absent*; thus, suppose you was with your mistress, you could not live was I absent. What a misfortune! And these women *that always fail being me*! You will find, perhaps, that wanting also to your Cecilia! This, however, is the stile which, by the abuse now made of it, is beneath the nonsense of compliment, and becomes a mere precedent,

to

to which no more attention is paid than to your most humble servant.

My dear friend, when you write to me, let it be to express your thoughts and feelings, and do not stuff your letter with phrases, which I shall find, without your assistance, well or ill told in the first romance of the day. I hope you will not be displeased at what I now say, if even you should discover some peevishness in it; for it must not be denied I am a little so at present. To avoid even the shadow of the defect with which I reproach you, you must not be told, perhaps, this peevishness is not a little increased by the distance I am from you. And I am inclined to think, all things considered, you are more eligible than a law suit and two lawyers, and, perhaps, even the *attentive* Bellerocche.

Observe, instead of being afflicted at my absence, you should be highly gratified;

gratified ; for I never before paid you so handsome a compliment. Your example influences me ; I shall be apt to wheedle. No ; I will retain my sincerity : it alone assures you of my tender friendship, and the interesting things it inspires. Is it not very pleasing to have a young friend, whose inclinations lead him elsewhere ? However, that is not the system of the generality of women, but it is mine. I always thought the pleasure greater, and more satisfactory, in a sentiment where there is no apprehension. Don't you think I have assumed the character of confidant for you tolerably soon : but you chuse your mistress so young, that, for the first time, I begin to think I grow old. You are certainly right, thus to prepare yourself for a long career of constancy ; and I sincerely wish it may be reciprocal.

You

You do right to cherish the *tender and honourable motives*, which you say *retard your hopes*. A long defence is the only merit of those who do not always resist: and I should think it unpardonable in any other but a child, like the little Volanges, not to fly a danger, of which she has had sufficient warning by the confession she made of her love. You men have no idea of virtue, and what the sacrifice of it costs a woman; but if she is capable of reasoning, she should know, that independent of the fault she commits, a single weakness is one of the greatest misfortunes; and I cannot conceive how any can fall, if they have a moment for reflection.

Do not attempt to combat this idea: it principally attaches me to you. You will save me from the dangers of love; and although I have hitherto guarded myself against them without your assistance, yet I consent to be grateful,
and

and shall love you more and the better for it.

On which, my dear chevalier, I pray God to have you in his holy keeping.

Castle of —,
Oct. 22, 17—.

L E T T E R CXXII.

*Madame de ROSEMONDE to the Presi-
dente de TOURVEL.*

I Flattered myself, my lovely daughter, to have been able to calm your uneasiness ; with grief, however, I am forced still to increase it ; yet be pacified, my nephew is not in any dangerous way. I cannot even say he is really sick. Still there is something very extraordinary in his disorder, which is incomprehensible. I
left

left his chamber with sensations of grief, and even of terror, which I blame myself for imparting to you, and still cannot conceal. I will give you an account of the transaction. You may depend on its veracity. Were I to live eighty years more, I should never forget this melancholy scene.

I went this morning to see my nephew. He was writing, surrounded with a heap of papers, which appeared to be the object of his employment. He was so deeply engaged, I was in the middle of the room before he looked about to see who came in. As soon as he perceived me, I observed, as he rose, he endeavoured to compose his countenance, and perhaps it was that made me pay more attention to it. He was undressed, and without powder; but his countenance pale, wan, and very much altered; his look, which used to be
so

so gay and lively, was melancholy and dejected: and, between ourselves, I would not for any consideration you had seen him thus, for his whole deportment was very affecting, and the most apt to inspire that tender compassion, which is one of the most dangerous snares of love.

Although struck with those remarks, yet I began a conversation as if I had not taken notice of any thing. First, I enquired about his health; and without saying it was very good, he did not complain of it's being bad. I then began to lament his recluseness, which had something the appearance of a disordered fancy, and endeavoured to mingle a little sprightliness with my reprimand: but he replied in an affecting tone; “ I confess it is another error, which shall be repaired with the rest.” His looks more than his reply, disconcerted my cheerfulness; and I told him,

him, he took up a little friendly reproach in too serious a manner.

We then began to chat on indifferent matters. A little while after he told me, an affair, *the greatest affair of his whole life*, would, perhaps, soon call him back to Paris. I was afraid to guess at it, my lovely dear; and lest this beginning should lead to a confidence I did not wish, asked him no questions, but only replied, a little dissipation might put him in better health; saying, at this time I would not press him, as loving my friends for their own sake. At this so simple a speech, he squeezed my hands, and with a vehemence I can't express, "Yes, my dear aunt," said he, "love
" a nephew who respects and cherishes you, and, as you say, love
" him for his own sake. Do not be
" afflicted at his happiness, and do
" not disturb with any sorrow, the
" eternal tranquillity he soon hopes
" to

“ to enjoy. Repeat once more, you
“ love me, you forgive me ; yes, you
“ will forgive me ; I know the good-
“ nefs of your heart : but can I hope
“ for the fame indulgence from thofe
“ I have fo grievoufly offended ?”
Then leaned down towards me, as I
believe to conceal fome marks of
grief, which, however, the tone of
his voice betrayed.

Inexpreffibly affected, I rofe fud-
denly ; and he, no doubt, obferved
my affright, for instantly compofing
himfelf, he replied, “ Your pardon,
“ Madam, I perceive I am wander-
“ ing in fpite of me. I beg you will
“ remember my profound refpect,
“ and forget my expreffions. I fhall
“ not omit waiting on you before my
“ departure to renew them.” This
laft fentence feemed to imply a wifh,
I fhould terminate my vifit ; I accord-
ly retired.

I am

I am lost in reflection, as to his meaning. What can this affair be, *the greatest of his whole life?* On what account should he ask my pardon? From whence could that involuntary melting proceed whilst he was speaking? I have since put myself those questions a thousand times, without being able to solve them. I can't even discover any thing relative to you; yet, as the eyes of love are more penetrating than those of friendship, I would not conceal any thing from you that passed between my nephew and me.

This is the fourth time I have sat down to write this long letter, which I should yet have made longer, but for the fatigue I undergo. Adieu, my lovely dear!

Castle of ——,
Oct. 25, 17—.

LETTER CXXIII.

Father ANSELMUS to the Viscount de VALMONT.

I Received, Monsieur Viscount, the letter you did me the honour to write to me, and yesterday, as you requested, waited on the person mentioned. I laid before her the motives and intentions that induced you to this measure. Although very determined to pursue the prudent resolution she at first took, yet on the remonstrances I made, that by a refusal she might incur the danger of throwing an obstacle in the way of your conversion, and in a manner oppose the designs of all-merciful Providence, she consented to receive your visit, on condition, nevertheless, it shall be the last; and

THE I has

has desired me to inform you, she should be at home on Thursday next, the 28th. If this day should not be convenient for you, please to inform her, and appoint some other; your letter will be received.

Give me leave to recommend to you, Sir, to avoid delays, unless for very cogent reasons, that you may as soon as possible give yourself up entirely to the laudable dispositions you express. Remember, whoever is silent to the calls of divine grace, exposes himself to have it withdrawn; that if the divine bounty is infinite, the dispensation of it is regulated by justice; and the time may come, when the God of mercy may be changed to a God of vengeance.

If you continue to honour me with your confidence, be assured all my care shall be devoted to you the instant you require it. Let my business be ever so great, the most important

shall ever be to fulfil the duties of the holy ministry, to which I am particularly devoted ; and the most valuable part of my life, that wherein I see my weak endeavours crowned with the benediction of the Most High. We are weak sinners, and cannot do any thing of ourselves ! but the God that now calls you is omnipotent ; and we shall equally owe to his goodness ; you the desire of being reunited to him, and I the means of conducting you. It is with his divine assistance, I hope soon to convince you, that religion only can give even in this world that solid and durable happiness, which is vainly sought in the blindness of human passions. I have the honour to be, with great respect, &c.

Paris, Oct. 25, 17—.

L E T-

L E T T E R CXXIV.

*The Presidente de TOURVEL to Madame
de ROSEMONDE.*

THE astonishment in which I am thrown, Madam, at the news I received yesterday, will not, however, make me forget the satisfaction it ought to give you, therefore I am in haste to impart it. M. de Valmont's thoughts are no longer taken up with me or his love; he wishes nothing more ardently, than to repair, by a more edifying life, the faults, or rather the errors of his youth. This great event was announced to me by Father Anselmus, whom he requested to be his director in future, and to treat with me of an interview, the principal design of which is, I imagine,

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gine, to return my letters, which he has kept hitherto, notwithstanding my requisitions.

I cannot undoubtedly but applaud this happy change, and congratulate myself, if, as he says, I have any way contributed to it. But why should I have been the instrument, and that at the expence of my repose for life? Could not M. de Valmont's happiness be completed but by my misfortune? Oh! forgive me this complaint, my most indulgent friend! I know it does not belong to mortals to fathom the decrees of heaven. Whilst I am incessantly and vainly imploring strength to overcome my unfortunate passion, it is prodigal of its favour to him who does not sue for it, and leaves me helpless a prey to my weakness.

Let me stifle those guilty murmurs. Did not the prodigal son at his return, find more grace with his father, than the one who never had been absent?

What

What account can we demand of him who owes us nothing? And were it possible we could have any pretensions in the sight of God, what could mine be? Should I boast of a modesty, for which I am only indebted to Valmont? It was he saved me; and shall I dare complain of suffering for him? No; my sufferings shall be dear to me, if his happiness is purchased at their expence. Doubtless, in his turn he should come back to our common father. The almighty hand that formed him should cherish its own work. He did not create that charming being to be reprobated. It is me should bear the pain of my daring imprudence. Should I not have reflected, since I was forbid loving him, I should not indulge myself in gazing on him.

My fault or misfortune is to have rejected this truth too long. You, my dear and worthy friend, will be

my witness, I submitted to this sacrifice as soon as I discovered the necessity of it : but to render it compleat, there wanted the circumstance of M. de Valmont not taking any share in it. Shall I confess to you, this is the idea that at present torments me most ? Intollerable pride ! which alleviates the evils we endure, by a consciousness of those woes we cause to others ! But I will conquer this rebellious heart. I will accustom it to humiliation.

This, motive exclusive of all other considerations, made me at last consent to receive next Thursday, M. de Valmont's painful visit ; — he will then tell me he no longer knows me ; that the feeble, transitory impression I had made on him exists, no longer ! He will look upon me without any emotion, whilst the dread of revealing mine will cast my eyes down. Even those very letters which he so long refused

fused to my repeated solicitations, I
 shall receive from his indifference; he
 will return them as useless trifles; he
 no longer cares for; and my trembling
 hand will receive this shameful trust
 from a tranquil steady one; last he
 will depart!—Depart for ever!—
 My eyes which will follow him, will
 not see his return to me.

Am I then reserved for all this hu-
 miliation? Let me at least make it
 useful by being penetrated with a sense
 of my weakness. — These letters he
 will no longer keep, I will lay up
 with care: — I will impose on myself
 the shame of daily reading them until
 my tears have defaced the last letter—
 and his, I will destroy, as infected
 with the dangerous poison which has
 tainted my soul. — What then is
 love; which makes us regret even the
 danger it exposes us to, and dread
 feeling it, even when we can no longer
 inspire it? Let me fly this destruc-
 tive

tive passion, which leaves no choice between shame and misery, and often reunites them: — let prudence then replace virtue.

How distant is this Thursday still! Why can't I instantly consummate this sorrowful sacrifice, and forget at once the cause and the object? This visit importunes me; I repent having promised it — what occasion to see me again — what are we now to each other? If he has offended me, I forgive him — I even congratulate him on his reformation; I praise him for it; I do more, I will follow his example; and, seduced by the same errors, his example shall reform me. But, why, when his resolution is to fly me, why begin by seeking me? The one that is in most danger, ought they not to forget the other? Doubtless they ought; and that shall hereafter be my sole care.

With

With your permission, my amiable friend, it shall be with you I will undertake this difficult task ; if I should want assistance, or perhaps consolation, I will not receive it from any other — you alone understand and can speak to my heart : — Your endearing friendship will fill up my existence ; — nothing will be difficult to second your cares : — I shall be indebted to you for my tranquillity, my happiness, my virtue ; and the fruits of your goodness will be to have at length made me deserving of it.

I believe I have gone very much astray in this letter, at least I think so, from the perturbed state I have been in during the whole time : — If there is a sentiment which ought to make me blush, cover it with your indulgent friendship ; I submit entirely to it ; I have not a wish to hide from you any emotion of my heart.

Adieu,

Adieu, my most respectable friend!
I hope to be able in a few days to announce that of my arrival.

Paris, Oct. 25, 17—.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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